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EXCLUSIVE VIDEO OFFER

TONY IOMMI

METAL IN THE SUN
SPANISH ROCK SURVEY

SPECIAL REPORT
THE ART OF THE ALBUM COVER

BLACK SABBATH
The Legend Fight Back

POISON
The Glam And The Glory

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Canadas' Prettiest Star

SKID ROW
Teasin' Bon Jovi

LIVE:
WHITE LION
WRATHCHILD AMERICA
TORA TORA

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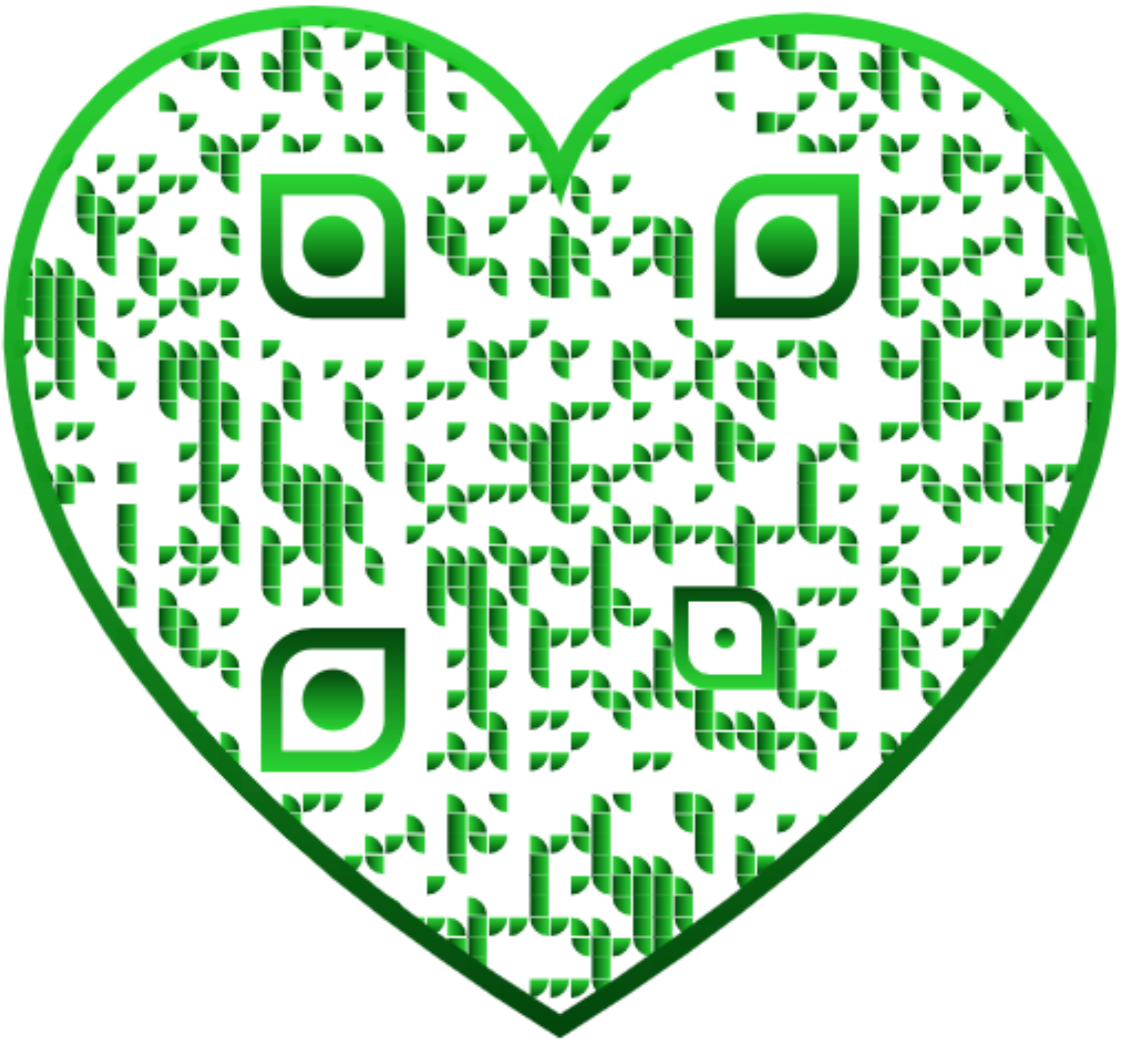

GUN

money

(everybody loves her)

THE 2ND SINGLE

ON 7" (WITH "PRIME TIME")
12" & CD (WITH "PRIME TIME" & "DANCE")

A&M RECORDS

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BLACK SABBATH

Pic: Mark Weiss

POISON

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The first international Hard Rock magazine

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EDITORIAL
HOW TO DESTROY YOUR IMAGE

Rock, along with the world of high fashion and advertising, is one of the most image conscious media forms of our age. There are constant attempts to deny this. An unshaven, acned bunch of hard core thrashers from the Bay Area might well say: *"We ain't into that kinda purty boy image stuff ya dig? We're creating our own urban musical terrorism, and we don't need to dress up."*.

But, poor fools, they are already living up to an image - of their own creation. Perhaps pose is a better, more accurate description, but in anycase, whenever a band or artist presents themselves, whether on TV, video, live or on an album sleeve, they are creating and perpetuating a vision of their styles and personalities that will be etched on the public's collective retina.

The brighter, more perceptive bands know full well the value of image in selling their stage act and music. However carefully cultivated, it must appear natural, and however outrageous it must be believable. This is where Guns n'Roses have scored. Their life style is their image and - as far as we can tell - it's a pretty accurate reflection of their real life activities.

A good image can make all the difference between selling three copies of an EP and being doomed to a life touring North London pubs, and mega stardom, multi-million selling albums and being interviewed on MTV's Metal Hammer show. So it is all the more extraordinary that many bands are prone to completely DESTROYING their image - in one fell swoop.

So many groups struggle to raise themselves from the mire, and battle for years to get records out in the pursuit of stardom. Then just when things are looking good, they blunder and do the daftest things that arouse scorn, ridicule and send their ratings and record sales plummeting. As a warning to young bands on the way up and to some older outfits who might yet commit a prat fall, here is a guide to some of the best ways to completely blow your image, compiled with the help of my assistant, the dark haired and beautiful rock spy Marta Hari-Upp.

BOOZE

Marta has been watching bands for years and naturally she has a feminine eye for male sex appeal and claims that one of the biggest image destroyers is when metal heads become metal bellies. *"Getting fat is a real turn off. It's okay if an artist starts out fat, like Meatloaf, but not if they become fat later. Another way for a band to destroy their image is getting TOO drunk. Drinking is fun, but not when the band becomes obnoxious through booze."*

Marta, who has interviewed many a group herself points out other key ways they can damage their status.

"Being sexist to female members of the rock press will result in a complete block. I won't accept it," she warns grimly. On a lighter note she says that a singer, simply by making a blithering idiot of himself on stage can completely spoil a carefuly nutured reputation. Sea Hags' singer Ron Yocum fell over on stage the moment he arrived in the UK for the band's grand debut. *"At first he kept his cool,"* says Marta. *"But then he blew it when he blamed it on partying. Any mention of Jack Daniels is completely uncool now - it's so overdone. The really cool bands are like Little Angels, clean living lads who drink Perrier."*

Naturally rampant outbreaks of racism won't do much for a band's image but few are prone to such lapses in these enlightened times. Marta is more concerned with the rather less serious, but equally damaging lapses of taste in matters of sartorial elegance.

"Wearing a loin cloth isn't very cool!" she claims in a heated reference to my old chums Manowar

Well, it might be Marta. it depends what is worn underneath. What really dismays our image expert is carelessness in matters of hygiene and appearance.

"Dawn After Dark all went out and got tattoos, then went around the same day wearing tee shirts and showing off their scabby arms. Yuk! And there are bands who adopt a very strong image and then are open to ridicule when the public just see through it. There's one London band who go around offering people coke and doing stupid things for a laugh, like a bunch of kids. But that's not very subtle. Not being subtle - that's how to destroy an image."

People can be stupidly unsubtle and get away with it though. David Lee Roth - on live television - jumped into the air and hit a glitter ball and broke his nose - or similar part of his anatomy. Lead guitarists are for ever hitting their heads with their guitar necks, or tripping over mike leads. Trousers are constantly splitting on stage.

"There was one gig I saw recently where the lead singer had his flies open the whole show. But that's forgivable. Everyone had a good laugh about that. I guess the worst image is where the band strips down to their underpants, like S.A.D.O. A singer in his underpants is uncool."

BLUNDERS

Cooler than a loin cloth? But problems with trousers, flies and underpants aside, surely the reported act of Guns' Axl allegedly shooting a pig at party is far more damaging to the band (and pretty damaging to the pig)/ This is the sort of thing liable to lose bands the Green vote. Such blunders of taste and lack of discretion may be covered up or restricted to local news reporting. But there is nothing more harmful to the image than a poor showing on TV where audiences are numbered in millions. Trousers splitting here might cause millions of Dutchmen, Swedes, Americans, French and anybody else who can get satellite and cable a really good metal belly laugh. Duff, inept videos too can wreck a band's future. There can be few more wally-ish videos than the one sent out by the Anderson, Howe, Wakeman band recently. Wimp rock, this tested the patience of their oldest fans

STRIPLINGS

In the image knocking stakes even our own MTV Metal Hammer show has to be careful. Watching the show when it featured Onslaught and The Grip, I was alarmed to see that by sitting on a sagging sofa, the artists, including interviewers Mick and Des Bailey all tended to look like Humpty Dumptys. The insensitive camera angle high-lighted double chins until they looked like triple chins and stomachs bulged in a most unflattering way. Okay for Dumpy's Rusty Nuts perhaps but not really the best way to present lissom striplings, as I believe Onslaught and The Grip to be. And before our TV chums start getting hot under the collar I should point out that often in the very pages of our magazine a poor photograph can set back the work of the PR and make up departments by 18 months. A surfeit of spots, hairy chests and a green face can turn off hordes of otherwise loyal fans.We are all to blame in this area and from now on I shall take steps to improve my own image by donning holey jeans, a black leather jacket covered in luggage locks, a blue tinged hair extension, and sharpen my teeth to jagged points. The golf club may be alarmed but it'll do me the power of good down at the Craven Arms. See you all next issue and thanks for all the tips Marta. Oh I say, Marta, did you know - there's tomato soup on your spectacles.

CHRIS WELCH

POTTER SPLITS SHOCK

PS: Well never mind all that. Here is the really important news of the day. We are sorry to announce the departure from our staff of News Editor and reporter Val Potter, who has proved a tower of strength to Metal Hammer over the past year. Whether through her pithy, insightful features, or highly professional news coverage, Val has established a reputation as a top rock journalist. Now she has decided to branch out and become a freelance writer and we wish her well. May all her contacts be fruitful! Val goes out in style this issue with some great features on Black Sabbath and Skid Row. So long Val - you'll be greatly missed. And I guess this means farewell to your old sidekick too - the legendary Val Halla. So its goodnight to Val - and goodnight to Val!

GET ON YER BIKES!

Pic.: Krassner/Trebitz/ERS

Yes guys, it's THE CYCLE SLUTS FROM HELL, those New York hell raisers, who have absolutely no connection with The Tricycle Vamps From Hades. According to Sleazy - sorry Easy Ed Esposito - our man in the Big Apple, these girls are *"From the vile and filthy streets of the Lower East Side. They are every man's dream and every poseur's nightmare."*

If you say so Eddie. The Sluts are black haired Queen Vixen, blonde She-Fire, auburn Honey, and blonde crimped Venus Penis Cruncher. Their songs are described as *"fantasy and joke orientated,"* and growls Venus *"People call us bimbos - but we have brains!"*

Ah but have they got puncture outfits? You could tire of these jokes quite quickly. But we'd put on our cycle clips, pumps and saddle bags for these gals any day!

GEORGE GUBBINS

Hot & Heavy"

ANTHRAX QUIT IN SPITTING STORM

Anthrax cut short their performances in Ireland, the final three shows on their recent U.K. tour, in protest at a small section of the audience who persistently spat at the band. In the case of the first two shows, they managed to complete the greater part of their set, but they left the stage on the fifth number at their third Irish show in Belfast. Spitting punters are a problem that many bands encounter when they play in Ireland and one that has become a controversial issue. Among other recent victims were German visitors Zed Yago. We called Anthrax drummer Charlie Benante at his New York home to ask him exactly what had happened.

"All the Irish shows were all sold out weeks in advance, so we thought it was going to be amazing. The first show was in a place called Omagh. We got on stage and there were some kids who were spitting, so we made an announcement saying, 'Look, we're not going to stand up here and be spit on.' We played longer, it started again. It was ridiculous, we warned 'em and we left.

"The second show was in Belfast. Before we got on stage, we made an announcement saying, 'We're not going to tolerate spitting.' We got on stage, it started. We stopped and said we weren't going to continue if the spitting continued. A little while later, the spitting started again - we left.

*"The third show was in Dublin. An announcement was made before the show, we got on, the spitting started - we stopped! We said, 'We're not going to stay here, we're not going to be spit on.' Everybody cheered, we started to go into the fifth song and boom! Joey gets spit right in the face! We said, 'F**k this! We do not need this shit!'*

"You have to think also about what's going through our minds when this is happening; the singer from the Clash, Joe Strummer, got hepatitis, because of spit. Plus it's disgusting*!*

Talking to the kids at the hotel after the show, from what they were saying, we did the right thing; they said it was stupid and disgusting and they wouldn't stay up there! We've been to Ireland three times before and it was never like this. It's just ridiculous now."

We had received a letter from a reader who had heard that the band would not return to play Dublin in future and we asked Charlie if there was any truth in the rumour.

"No, we're going to return there again - I don't think something like spitting is going to make us not come to a country - but we'll do the same thing. We have people in our crew looking in the audience for these kids and we have them thrown out. This is something we take real seriously - and talking to other bands, they *take it seriously too. I know some bands that have said, 'F**k* them*! We'll never play there again!' but I don't think that is such a good attitude to have. Just because there's going to be a couple of kids in the audience who want to spit, I've always said that we shouldn't ruin it for those other kids who come in to see us."*

While Anthrax were touring the U.K. many music papers, including 'Metal Hammer', ran Lemmy's open letter, speaking out against violent and disruptive audiences and calling on bands to leave the stage when necessary. We asked Charlie whether this had had an effect on other bands

"I think so. I agree with some of the things that Lemmy said and I don't agree with other things; I see nothing wrong with stage-diving and moshing. Most of the kids who stage-dive know what they're doing; they come up and they jump right in. Then you get some kids who want to be a part of the band, who stay around and step on things, and that's when things become uncool."

Did the incident leave Anthrax with bad memories of the U.K. tour?

"No, absolutely not. We enjoyed playing a lot of shows - the Brixton show was one of our best."

And finally, do you have any message for the spitters?

"Yeah - drop dead! I hope you choke on your spit!"

Roadrunner will release Lizzy Borden's new album, entitled 'Master Of Disguise', on August 7. Produced by Elliot Soloman and Alex Woltman, the record was mixed in Toronto by Lizzy and Terry Brown *(Rush, Cutting Crew)*. Lizzy recorded the album as a solo artist and his main backing musicians on the record Joey Scott *(drummer and only remaining original Lizzy Borden band member)*, Mike Davis *(bass)* and David Michael Phillips *(King Kobra guitarist)*. The record also includes contributions from Armored Saint bass player Joey Vera, guitarist Ron Cerrito, who has played live with Lizzy in the past, and a forty piece orchestra. The track listing is as follows: Side 1 - Master Of Disguise, One False Move, Love Is A Crime, Sins Of The Flesh, Phantoms, Never Too Young. Side 2 - Be One Of Us, Psychodrama, Waiting In The Wings, Roll Over And Play Dead, Under The Rose, We Got The Power.

FUNKY VIBE

While Bay Area thrashers Mordred have been roundly praised for their debut album on Noise Records, 'Fool's Game', guitarist Jim Taffer of the funk flavoured thrash band has left. His replacement will be original Mordred guitarist Jim Sanginetti who was replaced by Taffer shortly before the album was recorded. Expect to see the new line-up touring sometime this Autumn, supported by Texan Noise Records signing Watchtower, said to be the new holders of the Voi Vod crown. Watchtower will also spend time recording an album in Europe with Alan Leeming, producer of the recent Pariah release. The Texan four-piece have recently added a new vocalist, Alan Tecchio, who recorded two albums with the now defunct Hades.

News

THE METAL HAMMER NEWSLINE

BELLADONNA

The bad news is that the release of Belladonna's four track EP has been delayed until the end of September. The good news is that it will now contain an extra track and will therefore be a five track mini-album.

SHOUT NO MORE

Lead singer and guitarist KEN TAMPLIN of SHOUT has confirmed that the band will be changing their name in the very near future. They have not decided on a new title yet, but expect tc choose one within the next few weeks. The band has recently completed recording a 40-minute concert shot in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. This concert will be also be used for a long form video cassette. After playing for a crowd of 15,000 people at the Cornerstone Festival in Chicago, SHOUT have returned home to plan the next leg of their States-wide tour in support of their 'In Your Face' LP, out in the U.K. on Music For Nations. The band will be playing shows in about 60 cities across North America. Ken has now completed work on ANGELICA's debut LP. Lead singer ROB ROCK *(Driver, Impellitteri, Joshua)* stepped back and let KEN sing lead vocals on the song 'Face To Face'. The LP, entitled 'Angelica', will be out soon on Music For Nations.

KISS 'N' MAKE UP

SONS OF VALENTINO, spikey rock 'n' rollers, have signed to One Big Guitar Records *(home of Under Neath What before they signed to WEA)*. Their debut for the label will be a twelve inch double 'A' side single, featuring 'Just Dreamin'', 'It's Gotta Be You' and 'Something About The Way You Look'. The Sons are currently looking for a fat advance from a major and hope to be touring soon.

LET THERE BE GRIND

Earache Records, who're currently in the middle of the long running feud between Napalm Death and hardcore pranksters Sore/Saw Throat, have scheduled a release by nine 'grindcore' bands, titled 'Grindcrusher-The Earache Sampler'. Alongside the Nappys *(that's Napalm Death, kids!)*, mutilated flesh rippers Carcass appear, with Bolt Thrower, Intense Degree, Morbid Angel, Repulsion, Godflesh, Terrorizer and Filthy Christians. Available for three pounds *(L.P./cassette)* or an incredible four pounds *(C.D.)* the record is *"our attempt to define the genre. All the songs are brand new, unreleased tracks recorded in the early months of 1989."*

pic.: Michael Bussmann

Guitarist Axel Rudi Pell, a former member of cult German act Steeler, who achieved much less than might have been expected, Rudi Pell is hoping to achieve slightly more with the release of his first solo album.
He begins recording soon, and intends to produce himself, while ex-Victory/Gary Moore/Ted Nugent vocalist Charlie Huhn will add some credibility to the project by covering the vocal duties. Huhn is currently fronting a reformed Humble Pie *(though which original members of the Pie are involved isn't known!)*.
Ex-Warlock / U.D.O. bass player Frank Rittel will be involved *(if he doesn't end up ex-Rudi Pell as well!)*, while drumming will be ex-Rage drummer Jorg Michael, currently a member of V2, who toured with Helloween in the U.K..
Original Steeler bass player Volker Krawczak will be joining Pell in a second stab at fame. Steeler oldie 'Call Her Princess' is set for re-recording.

PELL'S BELLS

TARTAN TERROR!

Scottish thrash band DRUNKEN STATE are about to commence work on their debut album. Titled 'Kilt By Death', it'll be produced by Unkle Bastard, who recorded the recent albums by Acid Reign and Re-Animator and produced Drunken State's debut E.P., 'Bags Not Carry The Coffin', which has since sold out of its first pressing.
Fans of 2000 A.D. comic should look out for the album when it's released, as the artist who's been commissioned to create the sleeve art-work is Simon Bisley of A.B.C. Warriors/Slaine
fame.

Currently in the studio are Coroner, mixing their third album, 'No More Colours', produced by Pete Hinton of Saxon and Batfish Boys production fame. Expect a release in October, and tour to follow.

Sabbat mainman Andy Sneap and manager Grant Samuels are currently negotiating U.S. representation for an upcoming tour. Andy will not be cutting his hair for his American trip, according to a Noise Records spokesman, but will be drinking quite a lot. Expect a full European tour in September. Andy commented *"It's tough at the top."*

IAN GILLAN DE-PURPLES

Ian Gillan and Deep Purple have parted company - and that's official. In a brief statement Purple say: *"five years after the reformation of the classic Mk. II line-up, the band have decided that Ian Gillan should leave. The reason is entirely and categorically due to 'musical differences'. The remaining Purple members are still searching of a new vocalist and plan to release a new album in January 1990 through their world-widedeal with RCA/BMG.*
Gillan's departure will apparently not affect Purple's involvement with the charity project in aid of victims of the Armenian Earthquake. This will involve an 'All-star' re-recording of Purple's classic 'Smoke On The Water'.
Since Deep Purple reformed in the early Eighties they released three albums, 'Perfect Strangers,' 'House Of Blue Light'and 'Nobody's Perfect.'Ian Gillan recently became involved with his own project, playing gigs and singing as Garth Rockit, which apparently displeased the rest of Purple.

TURN DOWN THE HEAT

While Accept have yet to find a U.K. release for their 'Eat The Heat' album, featuring new vocalist David Reese, it seems that drummer Stefan Kaufmann has bowed out. He has not left to join a new band, however. Sadly it's arthritis which has caused his departure.
Accept are continuing on tour with Metal Church and W.A.S.P., with Ken Mary of Alice Cooper/Chastain/House Of Lords/Fifth Angel infamy adding another string to his bow via the Accept drumstool.
This is not a permanent situation and Accept will be replacing Mary at the end of the tour. Interested parties should contact Breeze Music, Hauptstr. 33, 5024 Pulheim 3, West Germany.
Kaufman intends to continue contributing to Accept on the song-writing front and may move into production, possibly working with U.D.O..

Pic.: George Chin

Hot & Heavy News

TATTOOED LOVE BOYS DRAFTED

The Tattooed Love Boys have recruited lead guitarist Mark Ama Chan *(ex-GinSling)* and rhythm guitarist Adam Godzikowski to replace Cris Jagdhar. At present the band are in the studio to record an EP for release on the Episode label.

CHASTAIN WORKS EVEN HARDER!

After the CHASTAIN band wrapped up their U.S. tour recently, workaholic DAVID T. returned home to begin working on the next CHASTAIN studio album. There are no song titles or LP titles yet, but DAVID expects the album to be released in early 1990.

Lead singer LEATHER is currently rehearsing for the 'Maidens Of Metal' tour across the U.S. she's participating in for the remainder of the summer. LEATHER will be backed by L.A. female band WARBRIDE. The tour is scheduled to begin in early August, and go through mid-September.

ROXX GANG GET STITCHED UP

On one of the last nights of their U.S. tour, ROXX GANG met up with a couple of 'unsavoury characters who attempted to break into their tour manager's hotel room. Apparently, the two men were trying to collect an expensive debt the band had run up while in town. Fortunately, the pair were caught by hotel security and forced to leave before things got out of control. The Gang haven't been able to stay out of trouble at home either. Recently, in a fit of anger, guitarist WADE HAYES put his hand through a plate glass window. WADE was rushed to the hospital, where he received 18 stitches, from his middle finger down to his wrist. Luckily the guitarist is fine now, and the injury has not affected his playing at all. Meanwhile, bassist ROBY 'STRYCHNINE' STRINE was determined to have a blast at lead singer KEVIN STEELE's 4th of July party. ROBY shot off a large number of bottle rockets, which continually landed on a neighbour's property. After several warnings, the police were called, and ROBY was released on bail. More productively ROXX GANG have shot a video for their new US-single 'Scratch My Back' at a free concert in St. Petersburg/ Florida sponsored by local radio station WYNF. The rest of the footage was shot in various places around town, with the band featuring cruising the streets on their motorbikes, and 'hanging out' surrounded by girls in lingerie. We're promised these sexy scenes will be *"straight from the Rob Lowe tradition of film making"*. The video will be produced by Ralph Ziman, who has worked with LA Guns, Rick James and Killing Joke in the past.

THE KING'S NEW CLOTHES

After running into legal problems with Kiss' Gene Simmons over his distinctive black and white make-up, King Diamond has now unveiled his 'new look'. His new album, 'Conspiracy', the follow-up to the 1988 'Them' record, is scheduled for release on August 28 and King is currently in the States, working on the stage show for the 'Conspiracy' tour; the production will apparently include props and actors portraying the characters featured in the album's concept.

BOURBON STREET CHANGED LINE-UP.

The Band, recently known as ROYAL FLASH, has changed their name to BOURBON STREET and parted company with ex-Accept guitarist Jörg Fischer, who is looking for new Band members in L.A..

BOURBON STREET, with original members Dave Fefolt (vocals-pic left)and Rex Tennyson (bass-pic right), in the meantime has completed the Line-up with German musicians Wolla Böhm (guitar), Jens Frank (guitar) and Drummer Herbert Dreger, who played all in Darxon before.

The Band recently signed a major Deal and will begin to rehearse in the near future, possibly with Producer John Sonneveld(Vengeance).

HARD STUFF

Foreigner frontman LOU GRAMM releases his second solo album, 'Long Hard Look ' for the Atlantic Label in September. The album was originally scheduled for a much earlier release, but Gramm has laboured hard re-recording and remixing tracks for the project. There is no news as yet as to where this leaves Foreigner's future.

BRITNY FOX

***Britny** Fox have started work on their second album at Power Station Studios in New York City, the follow-up to their debut, self-titled album which has to date sold more than 800,000 copies. The new album will be entitled 'Fuel The Fire' and will be produced by Neil Kernon (Dokken, Autograph).* The twelve tracks that will be included on all configurations of the album are: 'In Motion', 'Standing In The Shadows Of Love', 'Hair Of The Dog', 'Stevie', 'Shine On', 'She's So Lonely', 'Livin' On A Dream', 'Left Me Stray', 'Plenty Of Love', 'Long Way From Home', 'Angel In My Heart', 'Longroad'. The album should be released towards the end of October and will be supported by a world tour.

BURST INTO FLAMES

Pic Mark Weiss

SARAYA'S MARQUEE GIG

SARAYA, the hotly tipped new five piece rock band from New Jersey, cross the pond in August for a series of shows as guests of FM plus a headlining gig at London's Marquee Club *(see tour dates for details)*. These will be the first UK dates for the band fronted by SANDI SARAYA. Their debut album 'Saraya' has been released in July, a single 'Love Has Taken Its Toll' will be released to coincide with the dates.

LIZZY BORDEN - DIS GUY'S BACK

Roadrunner will release Lizzy Borden's new album, entitled 'Master Of Disguise', on August 7. Produced by Elliot Soloman and Alex Woltman, the record was mixed in Toronto by Lizzy and Terry Brown *(Rush, Cutting Crew)*. Lizzy recorded the album as a solo artist and his main backing musicians on the record Joey Scott *(drummer and only remaining original Lizzy Borden band member)*, Mike Davis *(bass)* and David Michael Phillips *(King Kobra guitarist)*. The record also includes contributions from Armored Saint bass player Joey Vera, guitarist Ron Cerrito, who has played live with Lizzy in the past, and a forty piece orchestra. The track listing is as follows: Side 1 - Master Of Disguise, One False Move, Love Is A Crime, Sins Of The Flesh, Phantoms, Never Too Young. Side 2 - Be One Of Us, Psychodrama, Waiting In The Wings, Roll Over And Play Dead, Under The Rose, We Got The Power.

New Jersey thrash combo Faith Or Fear are issuing their debut album 'Punishment Area' on Combat in the U.S...

'Rumour has it...' that the Metallica return visit of the '..Justice' tour is still possible. The band are still touring the U.S. with The Cult in tow.

Rush have changed record labels, moving from Mercury to Atlantic; they are currently recording a new album for release in November.

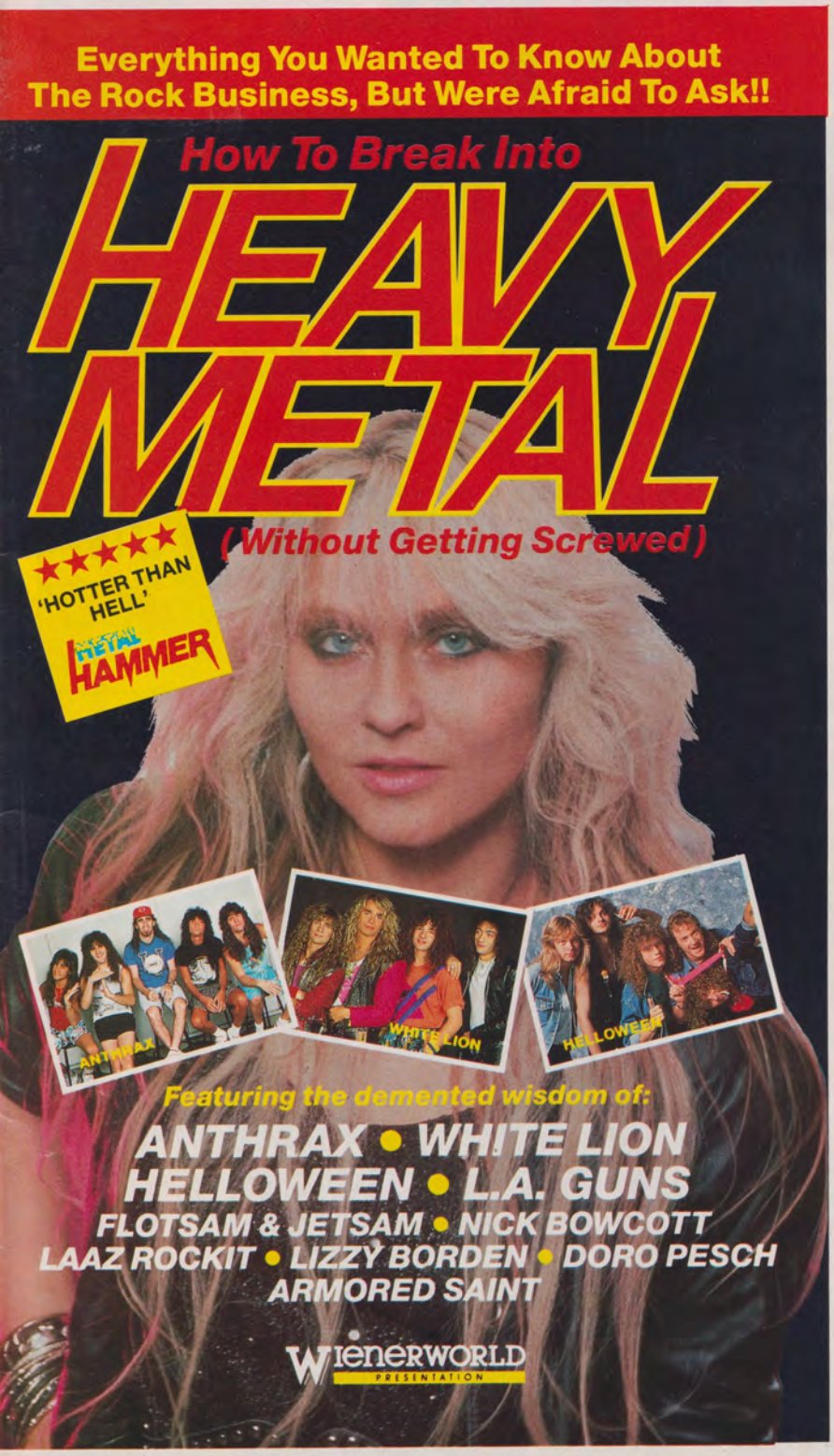
SAM'S BACK

Metal Hammer's favourite vomiting metal maniacs, Uncle Sam are working on their second album, 'Letters From London'. Should be called 'Spewing Over London' if you ask us!

MAMA'S MEN

The increasingly ageing Mama's Boys have strapped on the fiddles and Flying V's one more time for an Irish tour with new frontman Connor McKeon. Searching for a new deal, since being dropped by Jive Records, the band seem to be returning back to their roots.

HOW TO BREAK INTO HEAVY METAL
(WITHOUT GETTING SCREWED)



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IT'S BLACK SABBATH CONTEST TIME

E X C L U S I V E . :

FANTASTIC PRIZE OIL PAINTING TO BE WON!

You've seen some great prizes on offer in Metal Hammer. Well here is the most unusual yet! We can now offer readers the chance to win an original painting by top artist, RAY BARREL who specialises in portrait painting . And his special subject this time will be BLACK SABBATH!

That's Ray has been commissioned to paint a superb portrait of the current line-up of the band which will be worth at least 1000. Imagine it framed and hung over your fire place, just the thing to grace any heavy metal homestead. This rare artefact will increase in value over the years, and could become a rocker's family heirloom!

Mr.Barrel will be setting up his easel and mixing paints in readiness for his great masterpiece, while all you have to do is cast your eyes over the three simple questions below. Answer the questions and complete the tie-breaker, and send your entries to

SABBATH PAINTING CONTEST,
Metal Hammer, 59 Queens Gardens,
London W2 3HF.

THE QUESTIONS

1. Name the members of the original Black Sabbath
2. Give the names of the present 1989 line up.
3. State the title of their current album.
Tie-Breaker: State in no more than 15 words why you'd like to own the unique Black Sabbath painting.

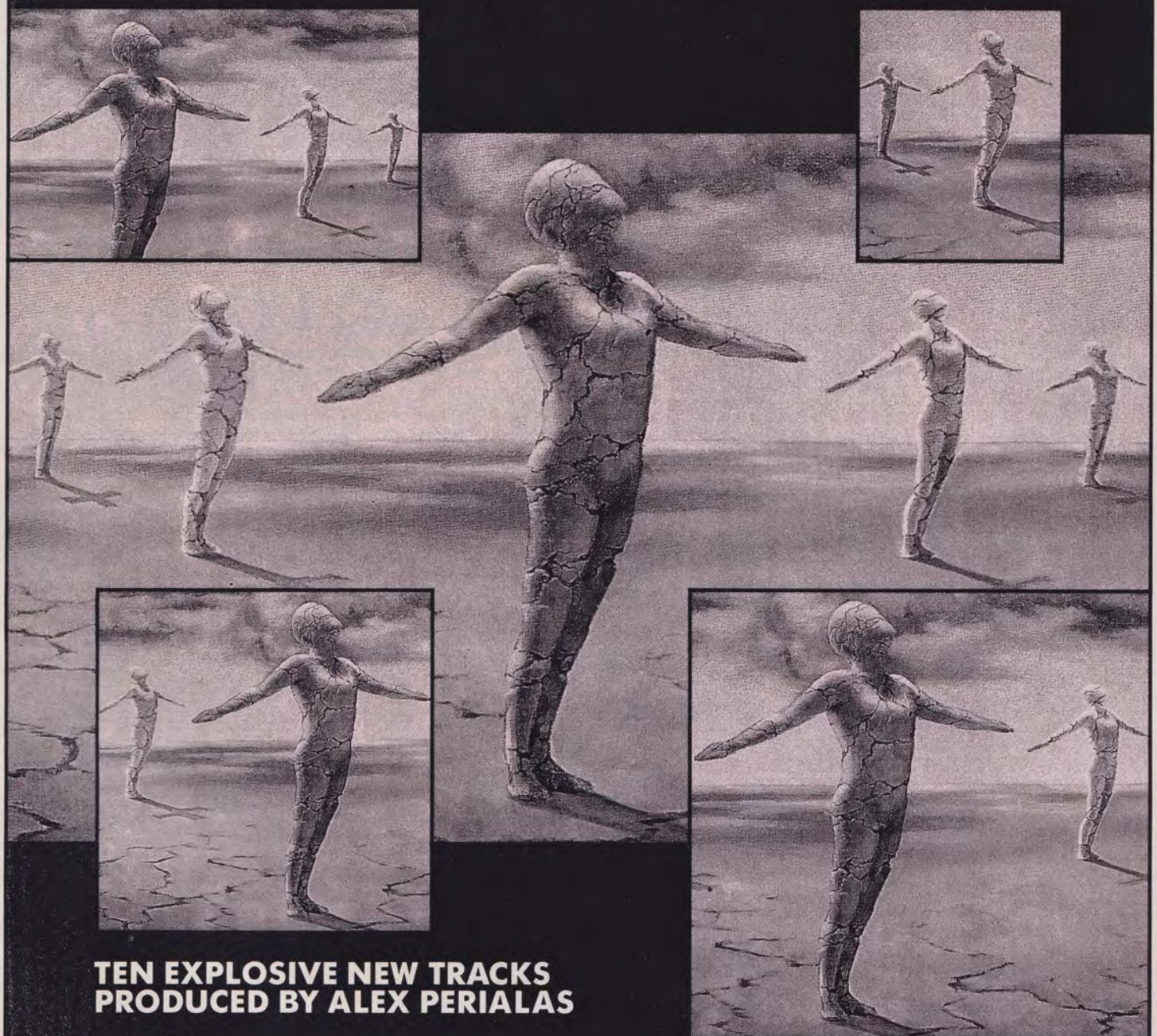
Rules: The best correct entry will be judged the winner.
The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

CLOSING DATE: August 18, 1989

TESTAMENT

THE NEW ALBUM

PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH



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PRODUCED BY ALEX PERIALAS

'PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH IS A VITAL MOVE.
TESTAMENT PREACH THOUGHT IN THEIR ALBUM.'
STEFFAN CHIRAZI/KERRANG!

MEGAFORCE

ATLANTIC

BLACK

Pic.: George Chin
Pic.: Krasner/Trebnitz

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE NEW YORK PALLADIUM

Dressed in black and wearing his distinctive, fringed black leather jacket, Tony Iommi was instantly recognisable as he walked down the New York street to the Black Sabbath tour bus. Nine punters immediately appeared from nowhere and clustered around him, politely and excitedly asking for autographs. Equally courteously, Tony obliged and delved into his bag for plectrums to hand amongst them. A security guard spotted what was happening and left the backstage door to escort us down the street, but no sooner had we detached ourselves from the first group of fans, when a second larger contingent spotted the guitarist and yelled *"To-nee!"* delightedly.

"I wonder if this was such a good idea," Iommi muttered apprehensively, as the crowd bore down on him, but he stood his ground and signed for the ever expanding group of fans, all eager to shake the guitarist's hand and tell him, *"Tony, you're the best, man - you're the greatest!"*

But once we'd gained the sanctuary of the bus and had settled down in the rear lounge *(only to find that the driver was just about to take the vehicle round to the backstage door that we'd just vacated!)*, his face cracked into a grin and he said, *"That was fabulous, that was!"*

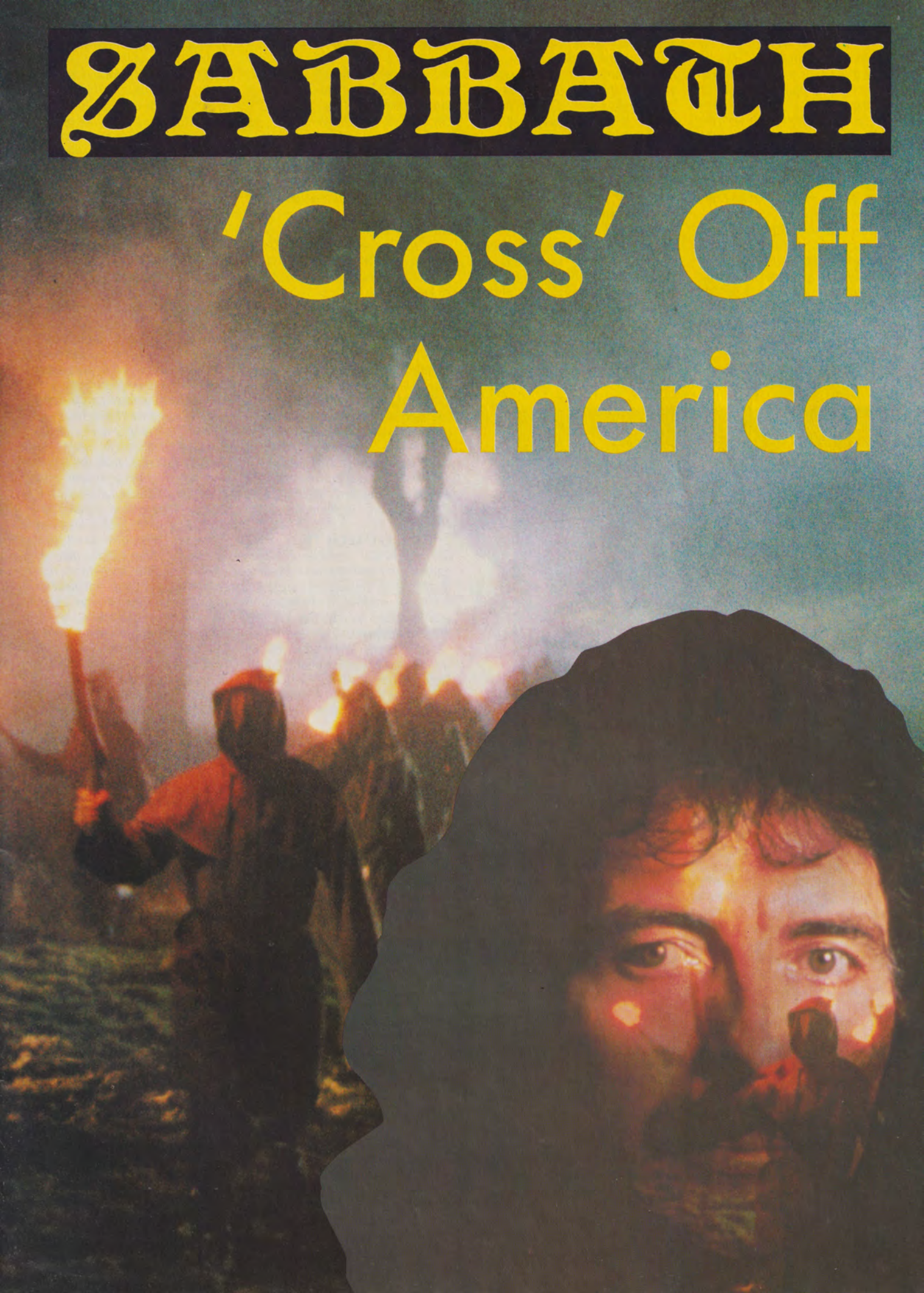
The warmth of the fans' reaction gave Tony's morale a much needed boost on what was a less than satisfactory day. After a lengthy drive to New York, the band had been annoyed and disheartened to find that they couldn't spot a single poster advertising the Sabbath show at the Palladium that night. Tony was further saddened by the fact that the theatre, which had been an out and out rock and roll venue when he'd last played it with Sabbath, had undergone a radical transformation so that it could double as a late night disco, thereby severely restricting the facilities for live shows. This renovation had resulted in the crew having problems loading in the equipment and an obligatory scaling-down of the Sabbath production for that night's show.

To compound the band's general foreboding concerning the forthcoming show *(which was later proved unjustified - see my review in issue 13)*, the star dressing-room was a despressingly dismal affair, at the top of three flights of well-worn and smelly stairs, and so stiflingly airless that by common consent, it was decided that the band would wait until showtime in the comparative luxury of their air-conditioned tour bus.

And so it was that I spent a Saturday evening, wheedling, nagging, cajoling and otherwise inveigling the individual members of Black Sabbath to spend some time with me in the back of the tour bus - all in the interests of journalistic truth-seeking and fact-finding, of course...

SABBATH

'Cross' Off America



DEEP END

The first victim was Iommi himself - How is the new Black Sabbath line-up gelling now that you're out on your first tour?

"It's coming together pretty well. We just need to get out there playing now, particularly Tony (Martin), because he's never been over here before, so it's probably harder for him to try to get over to them; he's been thrown in the deep end."

How has touring affected the band?

"We're getting on really well; it's a lot better than I thought it would be, actually. I think it's better than we all thought it would be, especially travelling on a bus. In the past, we've always flown - I've never toured America on a bus, never ever - but this is really good. I like it."

You left it very late before announcing that Neil Murray would be the new Sabbath bass player, amidst strong rumours that you were about to poach Geezer Butler from Ozzy's band. What's the real story?

"We don't know quite what happened there; I think we were led up the garden path a bit, to be honest. Gloria, Geezer's wife, was saying, 'Yes, he wants to do it, he's definitely going to do it' - and so on, until the last minute, when we were saying, 'Gloria, when's he going to do it - we've got to rehearse and get moving?' She just strung us along as far as we're concerned - we hadn't spoken to him, just Gloria - and we just couldn't wait any longer. We'd waited a year and we thought it'd gone on too long. I met Neil for the first time at the Hippodrome signing and he seemed a nice chap, so it went on from there; we called him, tried him and it worked out really well."

How much time did you have to rehearse with Neil before the tour started?

"We didn't have a lot of time, because he was still with Vow Wow and had to finish off some shows with them. Meantime, we were rehearsing without a bass player, which was - weird! So it was pretty much into the deep end, really - and even on the first shows, he was still learning some stuff. He's a very good bass player, but you need a particular sort of style to play some of our stuff, like Geezer's style of playing, which Neil is aware of, and he had to listen to a lot of our material to get an idea of what we mean."

Why did you start the world tour in the States?

"I don't know, I think we should have started in Europe, personally, and come here later. This is a bit disorganised; there's no posters around, not much advertising, and the kids just don't know we're playing. It's difficult when you walk outside a gig and someone says, 'Oh, I didn't know you were playing here tonight!', and that's really how it's been. And it's sad, because even hardened fans - there's one I was talking to last night, a fan of the band since 1971, who said he wouldn't have known we were doing this tour if he hadn't spoken to me personally. That's how bad it is. Somebody, either the agency or the promoters, are not doing their job at all - our manager is disgusted with it - and the way it's going, if they don't pull their socks up, we'll just cut the tour short, because we can't carry on with people not knowing that we're playing - and who you blame for that, I don't know."

(In fact, a few days after this interview took place, the remainder of the American tour was cancelled; the band are hoping to reschedule the dates for the autumn.)

How do you feel about the forthcoming U.K. tour?

"I'm looking forward to doing that because we haven't played England for bloody ages. The ticket sales are going quite well apparently. Strange, isn't it? (laughs) Maybe they've got posters up!"

How do you feel about the U.K. music press now? It seems that, with the release of a strong new album, some of the people that tried to bury the band in the past now number themselves amongst your staunchest supporters!

"I can't believe it, I don't know if it's the old theory of 'if you can't beat 'em, join 'em', but it's great, I'm really pleased. We are a British band, so I think it's about time they got behind us. For Christ's sake, there's very few of the older bands left, so it's nice to see them backing us a bit."

With such a wealth of material to choose from, how did you go about deciding which numbers were to be included in the live set?

"Cor, that was difficult! We put together a list and we had about six hours' worth of stuff, so we had to cut it! What we ended up doing was cutting a number in half and then joining it with another one, half and half, trying to fit them in, but there's so much stuff. And we're not doing drum solos or guitar solos - it's just all numbers. We still had to pull some out, because time was going on. We could have played them, but with three groups on the bill, it's a bit difficult to do a two hour show."

RUMOUR

On cue, the band's manager entered the lounge to announce that, due to the load-in problems, the show was over-running and to ask the band to cut 'Call Of The Wild' from the evening's set.

"As long as everybody knows before we go on," said keyboard player Geoff Nicholls.

"As long as everybody knows before we start on the first note!" said Tony. *"It 's a good job we didn't do that six hour show, weren't it, Val?"*

Using the interuption to make good his escape, Tony moved to the front of the bus, to be replaced in the hot seat by new bassist, Neil Murray.

"How did you get the name Black Sabbath? How long have you been together? What are your main influences?" Neil teased, as he sat down.

No, Neil, let's start with another obvious one - tell us how you came to leave Vow Wow and join Black Sabbath.

"Well, I kept on denying that I was going to join, because there seemed to be this rumour going round; the band couldn't name the bass player, and people put two and two together, and got my name out of it. I went down to the Hippodrome with them, just socially, and I'm standing there, telling everybody, 'No, no, it's not me - I'm not the bass player', genuinely meaning it, and the next day Cozy rang up and said, 'What are you doing?' They'd thought I was very tied up with Vow Wow, whereas in fact I'd decided to move on after two years with them. I hadn't made any specific plans, but it just happened that it worked out very well."

So you were looking to make a move from Vow Wow anyway, even if this opportunity hadn't arisen?

"Yeah, I think, in the long run, it was best for them, and for me, to have a totally Japanese band for various reasons. If you're together for a long, long period of time, then you want it to be a smooth-running marriage, and if you have a completely different cultural background, it's not 100 per cent. I'm not making out that it wasn't doing pretty well, musically and otherwise, but in the end, I don't think it was as good as it could be from either side, just because it's a little bit unnatural."

It must be very strange to be in a band with a language barrier?

"They speak English pretty well, but it's more in things that you have in common. You go to Japan with a Western band and it seems very Westernised, but when you go with a Japanese band, then you realise that that's very much on the surface and the way they think is really quite different to the way we think. Also, because this album didn't particularly do better than the last one and the record company hadn't been particularly supportive in Europe, I think they're going to go back to Japan, get a new bass player and maybe try to attack the States. To some extent, they were under pressure from the English record company management, and myself, and English producers, to become more Westernised and that isn't necessarily the best thing for Vow Wow; for them to have an identity of their own, they should actually be more Japanese."

How far have you had to adapt the style of your playing for Sabbath?

"Not a huge amount. There's a certain kind of style that Geezer Butler has that is quite free form in a way, but when it comes down to it, you have to play a lot of the lines that he plays because although they sound as though they're improvised, and they may well have been in the beginning, now they are part of the arrangement, so there was quite a lot of those to learn. Luckily, I pick things up pretty quickly and I'm just at the moment really finding out the spaces where I can do my own thing and find out which lines work and

ics.: Mark Weiss

which don't. Every time you move to another band, you have to alter certain things. If I listen to records I made ten years ago with Whitesnake, I have a completely different sound nowadays - but they sound completely different too!''

RUMOUR

Vocalist Tony Martin emerged yawning from one of the bunks where he'd been taking a pre-show nap and took over from Neil.

This is your first tour of the States; have you noticed any differences between U.S. and European audiences?

''They're willing to listen here. They come knowing that there's another singer in Black Sabbath and you get out there, look them in the eye, and say, 'This is it, chaps!' They gradually get into it, and by the end of the show, so far, I've had nothing but praise and best wishes from the guys out there. Obviously, I don't think we please everybody, but we're doing the best we can and we think it's a pretty good job.''

You stuck with Tony Iommi through a thin period, when it really did look as if it was all over for Black Sabbath. How do you feel about the way things are going for the band now?

''I have respect for Tony, for reasons that I've mentioned before; these are the guys that started me off in the first place. I have respect for Cozy, and for Neil, and I don't think that goes unrewarded. If you have respect for somebody and you know they know what they're doing, then you can sit back and think, this is going to turn out alright, because you respect each other's ability to carry things through. So I didn't really think it would die, but I knew it was going to be hard work, and it is. We're having to fight hard to get the kids to come and see us - and believe that we're here, almost! But it's an honour, really - to be with the guys and to work with them - and I want the kids to feel that same kind of honour.''

Many reviewers of the new album have found similarities between yourself and Ronnie James Dio as Sabbath vocalists; how do you feel about that?

''When I was with the Alliance, they said I sounded like David Coverdale; now they're telling me I sound like Ronnie James Dio! Well, the thing is, I have the sort of voice that covers a wide range of highs and lows, and it's natural if you're singing somebody else's material with that type of voice that you're going to get comparisons, so I kind of get pissed off about it, but at the end of the day, when they come to the show, they'll see Tony Martin. The comparisons are inevitable, but I'm kinda hoping that when they've seen Tony Martin, the next time they hear the voice, they'll go, 'That's Tony Martin'. I guess I've got a lot of hard work to do.

''I don't go rushing around on stage; I'm not that kind of character and I don't want to be. I'm not the Ozzy type and I skip the dramatics of Ronnie James Dio. I put credit where credit's due; if Tony's doing a solo, I don't wanna be trying to take the limelight, so I back off.''

Are you looking forward to the U.K. tour?

''Ahhhh - dare I say it?! To be honest, I've had a real hard time in the U.K.; I find that so upsetting. I seem to have come up against real hard crowds and that's, er, off-putting. I don't know whether being with a big name band this time makes any difference; I hope the kids are there to listen, I really do. I know they're all great at heart, but as far as I'm concerned, the kids in England have been spoilt. They've had so many good bands come out of England - Zeppelin, Sabbath, Deep Purple, all those bands - they should be proud of it. The whole world looks to England for music.''

When you say 'hard crowds', do you mean in terms of response?

''Yeah, it's like 'Okay, impress me - show me something I've never seen before'. But we're out there to put the band across, first and foremost; we're not out there to step on anybody's toes, we're not out there to say, 'Hey, all you ex-members - tough luck!' - 'cause it's not like that. We're just out there to do a job and we're going to do it to the best we can.''

CUTTING

The tour manager called for the band to start getting ready for the show, but drummer Cozy Powell coolly decided to linger in the bus for a further quarter of an hour to finish up the interview.

How did you come up with the suggestion of Neil for new bass player?

''I never actually thought Geezer was going to do it, to be honest with you, and I told Tony that. We tried out a number of guys that had been recommended to us and they were obviously not quite cutting it. It was leaving it a little close, because Tony was so convinced that Geezer was going to do it, and I knew, at that time, we'd have to get in somebody that had been around for a bit and I naturally thought of Neil. I thought he was out with Vow Wow, but I called him anyway on the Thursday night, he was there on the Friday and in the band on Friday night! Neil and I have played together on and off for years and years, so as far as the rhythm section was concerned, it was really tight and it worked out well.''

Kingdom Come, the targets of Gary Moore's 'Led Clones' track, on which you played drums, are one of the opening acts on your tour. How are you getting on?

''They haven't said too much to me, but the singer came up and gave me some nice compliments about a Rainbow album I was on, so perhaps he doesn't know! I know they obviously don't like Gary Moore too much - but then again, I'm not too fond of him either!''

Speaking of Gazza (*''Let's not!''* quipped Cozy), how does it feel to be in a full-time band member again, instead of a hired session player?

''It's great. People say I keep moving around; I move around session-wise, but then again, I think a lot of drummers do. It's great to be part of a band; had the Gary Moore tour happened, it just would have been 'Do this, do that' and there's not a lot of satisfaction in doing that after a while. I don't mind doing it in the studio, but on stage you have to be able to play the way you feel best. If every drum fill has to be the same every night, there's no fun in that for me. In that respect, it's fantastic for me to be part of this band.

''I think it's going to be a long, hard road for the next two years to build the band back up, because I think there's been a lot more damage done than anybody realised, but in saying that, it's a great band. We've only really been playing for three weeks, but I think we've done wonders. There's going to be quite a lot of people surprised at how tight the unit is by the time we get back to Europe.''

After all this time in the business, do you still enjoy touring?

''Honestly - no! All this is what I hate'' (waving his arm at the interior of the bus). *''I love the music, I always have done, but I've been in it too long - I've done one tour too many. But I stick it out because I like the music and this is a good bunch of guys, a real pro crew, and that makes it worthwhile. The ninety minutes of the show is great, but I've done all the schlepping around for fifteen years and that's too long. It doesn't get any easier.''*

The calls for Cozy to join the rest of the band were becoming increasingly more urgent, so he left the bus for the dressing-room and I found a spot on the balcony to watch the show, which, despite the band's earlier misgivings, took the audience by storm. Experience, expertise and sheer class lifted the band above the irritations of the day and they delivered a stunning show to prove once and for all that Black Sabbath are back and are still a force to be reckoned with. It's a shame that the rest of America won't get to find that out until the autumn - but I've already reserved *my* seat for the U.K. tour!

VALERIE POTTER

LEE AARON

Got a thing for you!

Lee who? It's a fair question. After displaying so much promise over the years, Lee Aaron has never quite managed to ignite her own personal rock bonfire, though she's bounced from one label to another, all the while promising to deliver the definitive Lee Aaron album. It never happened, and her recent association with Virgin subsidiary 10 Records proved to be the most disastrous of all. A major label, as ever they tried to water down an act for mass acceptance only to discover that the rock fans who had followed Ms. Aaron over the years weren't interested in soft rock. So once again she finds herself on a smaller company, but no longer required to record to please the whims of her producers and masters, Lee Aaron is coming back, but does anybody care?

After obligations to both Roadrunner and Virgin, Lee Aaron has now signed to the German Metronome label, although she is still waiting to complete a UK deal. *"You forgot one other record company, my first record 'Lee Aaron Project' was released on Phonogram in Germany. But that's such a long time ago. A lot of fans thought that we were signed straight to Virgin on the last LP. That isn't quite right. The deal was struck with 10 Records in London. 10 Records are a subsidiary of Virgin, and*

Pics: Stefan Kerzel

have got artists like Gary Moore and Roger Daltrey under contract. The 10 Records offices were shut down, and we had the option of either signing to Virgin, or going to another label.''

Looking back, what were the experiences with the other record companies?

''Maybe you're expecting me to say something negative. I'll have to disappoint you. I thought Roadrunner were a really excellent record company. Their distribution SPV works really well, and we sold lots of records. What more can a musician ask for? The relationship between artists and staff is very personal on independent labels, and often better than with the enormous companies that have to look after 500 bands or so. The decision to go to leave Roadrunner for Virgin wasn't made by me anyway, but by my Canadian label boss. He owns my world-wide rights. I don't think the Virgin team necessarily possessed the right marketing strategy for my 1987 record. It was a big mistake to release 'Only Human' as the first single. The album had some really hard songs too. After a single like that, quite a few fans thought that the whole record was just as wimpy, and they were disappointed. The record wasn't promoted as a rock record. I was meant to change my whole image, and portray something that I'm not. I'm a rock 'n' roll singer and that's all I'll ever be. We'll have to wait and see how things work out in the future.''

FRUSTRATED

Despite all the ups and downs, Lee Aaron seems laden with even more energy than in the earlier days.

''I'm very positive! Of course I've been through quite a bit, and I've seen other musicians fall by the wayside. You'll never progress frustrated. Creativity is the most aspect of our work. And you can only be creative if you are positive as well.''

From the end of August, you can catch Lee Aaron displaying her musical talents for the first time in two years. *''The new album should be available in the record shops from around that time. Obviously it will coincide with a good video that we recorded this summer. We'll be touring Canada after that. With a bit of luck we'll be in the UK by October or November. I know everyone says that. But I promise that we'll have toured Europe by the end of the year, either as support or as a headliner, depending on how well the record sells during the first few weeks. I'm really looking forward to the tour!''*

You'll hear one thing after just the first few beats off the latest Lee Aaron LP; Canada's prettiest hard rock export has hardened up again. Another case of back to the roots?

''Of course, our last record was softer than the albums. But we had an American producer. You can never transmit your ideas as well as you want to. You're forced to compromise. Our last record was produced for American radio. Things couldn't go on that way. We had to record an album that really came from out hearts. We had accumulated a lot of material after having been on tour for a year. Our producer Brian Allen had already worked with us. My guitarist John Albani co-produced the record. The three of us made the record without compromising at all. John and I wrote all the material on the latest album. Although my name isn't mentioned alongside the production credits,it was the first time that I was heavily involved with the production and arrangements of this album. I don't know whether I'll get more involved with the production side of things, but I know for a fact, that I will always be heavily involved with music in some way or another.

I'm extremely happy with my album, we had more fun than ever and you can hear that. The band has arrived back at home again after a failed outing. And I can hardly wait to go on the road again.''

STEFAN KERZEL

SKID ROW

Pic: Jodi Summers

YOUTH GONE WILD!

SKID ROW ON THE ROAD WITH BON JOVI

It's a sultry New York evening and the persistent rainstorm does nothing to relieve the heavy, hot atmosphere that envelopes the city like a warm, damp face flannel. I have just stepped off a flight from London and am feeling in need of a shower and a good night's sleep. Skid Row, on the other hand, despite having spent the day answering journalists' questions in their record company's office, are still looking bright-eyed, lively and eager to do yet another interview. One of the reasons for their animation is that they are excitedly waiting to see their video for '18 And Life' appear on television, in the no. 1 slot as Dial MTV count down their chart. This, coupled with the fact that in two days' time, they were to play their home base of New Jersey, opening for Bon Jovi, meant that they were all in a high, good humour.

Such is the demand for interviews with the band that I end up talking to them in shifts, taking turns with the journalist in the next room. First, guitarists Dave 'Snake' Sabo and Scotti Hill appeared; clearing away the leftovers of their sushi lunch, they opened boxes of pizza that had just been delivered for their dinner and having first solicitously shared their food with me and made sure that I had a drink, they settled down to talk about the band's early history.

GARAGE

Skid Row's debut album, released earlier this year, was produced by Michael Wagener, a man who seems to have cornered the market in classy, tuneful, young rock bands. I asked Snake and Scotti why they had chosen him for their album.

"He was one of those guys that just clicked with all five of us when we met him," Snake answered. *"And he was one of the few people who didn't give a shit about working by a formula - he didn't have a piece of paper saying, 'Well, I do it like this and this is the way we're gonna do it.' He takes into consideration what the band is about and feeds off that. We rehearse in a garage in New Jersey and he was down there in pre-production in the middle of summer, when it's really hot in there, for eight hours a day. That's really gutsy, because he's one of the top producers out there."*

It is no secret that Skid Row were given a helping hand in their career by fellow New Jerseyite Jon Bon Jovi, who set the ball rolling by recommending them to his manager, Doc McGhee. He signed the band for management, negotiated their contract with Atlantic Records and put them on the opening slot for Bon Jovi's extensive '89 tour of the States.

"I grew up in the same town with Jon," Snake explained. *"There was a whole gang of kids that hung out together, as there is in any town. It was nothing special - no one knew Jon Bon Jovi was going to be* Jon Bon Jovi *when we were growing up! But he was one of those type of people that always said, 'Whoever gets to do something, we'll always help each other out', and he kept his word on that. He liked the band, and really dug the songs, and felt strongly enough to put his word behind us. He did the same thing for us as he basically did for Cinderella; he got them started when they were in a club in South Jersey and we were playing clubs in Jersey also."*

Snake and Scotti started to reminisce on the New Jersey rock clubs where the band received their musical education; many of those clubs have

closed down since the legal drinking age was raised to 21.

Scotti: *"You know, you drive past these places now and for a lot of them, there's not even a building standing. We used to go to this place called Mingles. It was a cool club - they used to let us in for free and we'd go up and jam - "* (*"And run up a bar tab!"* added Snake.) *"Coming home from practice one night, we see this flame in the sky and there goes Mingles up in smoke!"*

Snake: *"It was our home!:-*

Scotti: "That's where we auditioned Sebastian. We got up onstage and played on the band's equipment."

BUDDIES

Vocalist Sebastian Bach is the most recent member to join the band. Previously based in Toronto, he was recommended to the band by an acquaintance who saw him perform in a jam session at American rock photographer Mark Weiss' wedding.

"We all pooled our money together and got him a one way plane ticket down here," Scotti remembered. *"We got him off the plane, brought him to Mingles, got up on stage and it clicked right there. We were just like old buddies meeting up who hadn't seen each other for years. Sebastian got into a fight - that was one of our first impressions of him! Well, not a fight - he took a swing at this dude, but he was so wasted, he missed the guy completely and fell right into Snake's arms!"*

Snake laughed. *"He has such a f**king attitude that he bawls out twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year -"*

Scotti: *"He really lives for what he does."*

Snake: *" - and that was one of the things we wanted in a lead singer and the things he saw in us, I guess, were the songs and the attitude we had, so it all clicked."*

Scotti: *"The Skid Row attitude is, we do what we love and basically, the only thing we know how to do - and we do it as loud as we can! We just do it because we mean it. There are really no gimmicks. We just play the way we listened to it when we were growing up."*

Snake: *"What you see is what you get. This is just five kids having a f**king great time! So life is very good right now."*

TREE

At this point, the record company decided that everyone should change places. Wiping pizza off our fingers, we shook hands and Scotti and Snake were replaced by Sebastian, drummer Rob Affuso and bassist Rachel Bolan. Sebastian limped into the room, complaining that his legs hurt because the band's tour manager had beaten him up the night before. Startled, I asked why?

"Oh, I just climbed a tree - and ate some of the leaves," he said, waving his hand nonchalantly.

"He forgot to say, the tree was in the middle of a hotel reception," Rob added drily.

Why did you do that, Sebastian?

"Oh, I don't know," he said, with a bored air. *"Because I like to piss the tour manager off, I suppose..."*

Settling down to their share of the pizza, the three band members were strangely reluctant to pick up where the two guitarists had left off and continue the discussion about the 'Skid Row attitude'.

"It's cliched," moaned Sebastian.

"To say a lot almost sounds like we planned on it," Rachel explained. *"We are the way we are, I'm sure Snake and Scotti told you. Everything that comes out of us is real, but we don't like to say that too much, 'cause after a while, it doesn't sound real any more!"*

"I guess attitude is the hip thing to have right now, but I hate that," stated Sebastian firmly. *"It's like, here we are, sitting in our record company office, and it's a great record company, but there's nothing quite like seeing your ad on the front of 'Billboard' and on the top, it says, 'Meet the new* bad boys *of rock and roll!'"* (The other two groaned in sympathy.) *"I thought, 'What the f**k is this shit? Gimme a break, man!' There's enough cliches in hard rock. People say, 'What do you think sets you apart from all the other bands?' and we say, 'Well, we think we're the very, very first band in history to ever have as a line-up a bass player, two guitar players, a drummer and a blonde haired singer - it's never been done!' We try to strip away as many of these cliches as we can."*

TOUGH

To change the subject, I asked how the tour with Bon Jovi was going.

"The tour's been going really good," Rachel answered, energetically sawing through his pizza *and* his paper plate with a plastic knife! *"It's everything we expected and more, because this was what we wanted to do all our lives and we're doing it. The quote we always use when people ask us how the tour is going is 'Tough f**kin' life!', because it's just going so good. It's cool - you travel, you see the whole world and you play in front of thousands of people every night."*

"Our faces hurt from smiling too much!" Sebastian laughed.

So keen are the band to play, that on the days off from the arena dates, they perform their show in small local clubs; on such a long, exhausting tour, why do they want to fill up their free time with even more gigs?

"It would be pretty hypocritical for a band to call themselves Skid Row and have their first tour just be 20,000 seaters!" Sebastian explained. *"We picked kind of the wrong name, so we try to play every toilet we can - and we'll keep doing it, for the next tour, and the next tour, and the next tour..."*

"That's where this band started out and we're not going to forget about it," promised Rachel. *"We don't give a shit about the actual club, it's the people that come to see us that we care about."*

PRAYER

When I asked the band what had been their personal highlights of the year so far, they listed the obvious moments, like playing Meadowlands Arena, meeting Gene Simmons, jamming with Nikki Sixx - but Sebastian came out with an original one.

"I had a personal highlight in a place called Carbondale, Illinois. I was feeling really abnormally *cocky this day, so I walk into Jonny's dressing-room before the show and I say, 'We're going to kick your f**king ass tonight!"* You don't do *that to a headlining band, right, and everybody in the band was like 'Who is this f**king kid?!', so Jonny comes out and watches the show and we dealt some serious business that night. After the show, Jonny comes back into our dressing-room and says, 'Sebastian, I wanna thank you, man. I was tired today, I didn't really feel like it, but you came back like a cocky muthaf**ker, and now I gotta go out there and show your ass up.' There's this note on 'Living On A Prayer' that he would kinda go around, and I said, 'Oh yeah? Well, if you weren't such a* puss, *you'd nail that note like you do on the album!', so he goes, 'Oh, I'm just lazy, man,' and I go, 'Well, there you go.' So I'm standing on the side of the stage and right at this point of 'Living On A Prayer', he* runs *the whole length of the stage, and does a knee-slide right in my face, and went, 'Liv-ing on a prayer', with his middle finger held up for the whole lead! That was a great thing!"*

As Sebastian finished his story, the band became electrified at seeing their video appear on the television at the top of the Dial MTV chart. Sebastian threw himself on the floor to sit cross-legged in front of the TV, captivated by the announcement that it was no. 1, and when the video was over, he crowed with delight, punching the air and slapping hands right round the room. At the moment, coming top of a chart is still a novelty for Skid Row - but it's something they're going to have to get used to in future!

VALERIE POTTER

Preaching The Gospel

Thrash has now grown so large, has been developing for so long, that it is threatening to burst asunder and uncoil itself before a mass metal audience. Metallica and Anthrax have managed such a transition in a big way whereas Slayer and Megadeth hang fire commercially. Both have the potential and the ground support to break big but both appear to be suffering from various handicaps, either personal or artistic. Yet these are the bands who could possibly survive if thrash as a genre collapsed in on itself and were no more. And there are rumours/fears that it just might happen. After six years thrash is finally peaking, with too many bands for too few an audience. If so that spells enormous pressure for the nearly nearly groups, bands on major labels, who have all garnered vast amounts of critical acclaim not matched by commensurate sales. We are talking about the best of the rest, Death Angel, Flotsam, Exodus, and of course Testament. Many of them are at the crucial third album stage, with Testament about to release 'Practice What You Preach' *(produced again by Alex 'If It Counts I'll Be There' Paralysis)* and according to vocalist Chuck Billy it's a musical change in more ways than one.

Pic.: Eric de Haas

Of Thrash

Sipping Hot Cocoa John Duke Has A Midnight Chat With Mr. Chuck Billy Lead Singer With Bay Area Artists Testament.

"It's still in the Testament mode but the songs have matured, they are more memorable. This time we haven't attempted to write a concept album. The material is still as heavy but not as thrashy. There are more combinations of styles and a lot more diversity. The band has developed a hell of a way since 'The Legacy' and our writing has come on accordingly. This time we have even included a ballad!"

Not having heard the new album I wondered whether Testament had joined the growing trend of thrash bands who are slowing down their material and writing more accessible stuff. I mean 'The New Order' hinted as much, didn't it?

"'Practice What You Preach' is definitely the most accessible album Testament has recorded to date. Hopefully it will still appeal to the people who bought 'The Legacy' but what we are looking for now is to convert an audience that's not necessarily into thrash, but more into metal. It's just a natural process, most bands as they continue develop both as musicians and people. Take me. When I first joined the band I had little say in what went down (Chuck joined when Steve Sousa exited for Exodus and was left having to translate a lot of Sousa's material) *but 'Practice What You Preach' is a real breakthrough moment because I can finally do what I want. For this album I wrote all the vocal melodies and consequently what you have is a distinct change in style. You see I'm a bit older than the other guys, I've studied music at college, had singing lessons, and know how to put a song across. And man, what a waste all that was for the first album! It went right out the window because then it was just a question of screaming or growling. Now I sing. I mean I tried to do it on 'The Legacy' but the other guys at that time just didn't want to know. Finally I compromised and maybe that was just as well because my taking control of the vocals and harmonies has coincided with the band's adopting a more mature, developed style of playing. The two things complement each other whereas in the beginning, if they had let me have my way, there might have been a damaging clash of styles."*

Isn't it an attempt to gain a more spontaneous feel to the music, to produce stuff that's more in the spirit of rock and roll? To get away from the overtly technical and complicated?

"Yes. It was bound to happen sooner or later. A lot of that is a reaction to like the critical albatross that hung over being in a thrash band in the early, early days. People would say you can't play your instruments you just put your heads down and hope to all finish up the same time! It was a complete misreading of the better bands, because it's obvious that to play good thrash you have to be great technicians, and perhaps as a consequence some bands started to do real complicated, tortuous stuff. Now people have realised that there isn't a need to have to do that anymore. To have to prove anything anymore. Technically you've got to realise that thrash, just like anything else, has a limit to it. It's been six years, bands are now looking for something fresh, different, and for 'Practice What You Preach' we went for a more spontaneous, less planned approach."

I think a lot of it simply stems from broadening your musical horizons and allowing yourself to be influenced by outside material, because in some ways you get mesmerised just playing the same riffs in the same technique. I'm listening to a lot of older stuff at the moment, Aerosmith, Zeppelin, Metallica."

Did this looser feel translate itself into the actual recording of the album?

"Oh yes. This time there are no overdubs except for the vocals. We went in and laid it down LIVE. Because, as is the case with many bands, Testament are a far more powerful force on stage than in the studio and sometimes have trouble translating the good points of one to the other. Recording in this new style really paid off. On past albums I've never been that satisfied with our guitar sound, it was always a bit flat, now we have them just so. And Alex was more than happy to go along with it, he said as a band we were tight enough,

TESTAMENT

Pic.: Eric de Haas

CHUCK GIVES THE FINGER

"We have this reputation for partying. We're the bad guys always in trouble. Its true. We're in our record company's bad books. We raided the producer's rooms and had a party. They called the police. We are not on the good side of Johnny Zee now!'

and he'd done the same sort of thing before. Then again we really produced a large part of the new album ourselves, with Alex coming into it more in terms of friendship, because we were comfortable enough with him to try things and make certain suggestions."

CHEESE

For me Testament's major quality is the ability to harness a ferocious primal power to creative musicianship, when so many other thrash bands tend to settle for one but never both.

"It all comes down to a question of influences. I mean we really do think about our stuff now. All the band are into different styles, and as with most thrash groups our sound is built around the guitarists, and they are like chalk and cheese! Alex (Alex Skolnick) *is into jazz, blues and classical sort of stuff. Thrash just happens to be something that he trips out on, even though there is no trouble when it comes to his writing for the band. He just seems to switch into another drive. Eric* (Eric Peterson) *on the other hand is thrash through and through, and never happier then playing the dirty massive riffs that Alex bounces his harmonies off. It's all a question of trying to make things interesting, trying something different. And the same thing goes for the lyrics. Before it was like conceptual stuff based on violence, evil and death. Cliched themes. For 'Practice What You Preach' I'm trying to write about more realistic day to day things. Like the title track is about not taking any shit from anyone and the dangers of being manipulated if you do. There is an anti suicide number, an environmental song about the indiscriminate burning of the rain forests in South America. We also have a song about child abuse and a couple of political numbers, dealing with the president and government."*

I want to write realistic messages that deal with contemporary issues because that will open up a whole new avenue of interaction with the fans that was impossible to get with the older stuff. That only left you open to lawsuits over suicides!"

Talking to Chuck it's obvious that Testament fully realise the significance of 'Practice What You Preach' in their development as a thrash band. Did this knowledge bring its own attendant pressures in the studio?

"Yes, lots of pressure, but that's because Testament always leave it till the last minute before we get our shit together. We write better that way. Like with only two months to go before the album had to be finished there was just one song ready and a couple of melodies! In the last week it ended up that as a band we had to completely write one number and I personally had to sort out the lyrics to three! But then Testament have never adhered to the write thirty throw away twenty mentality. What we write we use, when it's written it's done! And in the studio the way they are written is the way they go down, no changes, no other input."

How does your record company handle these last minute get togethers?

"Well, there's not too much they can really do about it! All in all I guess we give our record company a rough time. Like we have this reputation for having fun, partying, you know the bad guys that are always in trouble. I guess it's pretty much true. In fact we are in their bad books at the moment! A while ago we were doing a video shoot for the title track 'Practice What You Preach' and one night we got out of our heads on JD and at three in the morning decided to raid the producers rooms and have a party. Well things got out of hand, they called the police and threatened to call off the entire shoot! So at the moment we are NOT on the good side of Johnny Zee (Megaforce) *but it'll blow over. Hell, we got the shoot done in the end!"*

Future plans are for this little bundle of fun lovin' mayhem to hit Europe along with Metal Church and MOD, sometime in September. After that Testament will take the same bill back to the States. Chuck also mentioned that they might consider releasing some sort of live package too, but don't hold your breath.

John 'Silly Headlines' Duke

AXE-IT LIZZY!

A Man Out Of Time.

Lizzy Borden Tells A Reasonably Sober John Duke How He Finally Went Out And Did It His Way.'

It's official. Lizzy Borden has put away his axe but not before chopping out the dead wood as regards old personnel, to the extent of eradicating ALL past members. It's been two years since 'Visual Lies' and now as a solo artist Lizzy has finally emerged with new album 'Master Of Disguise'. It's supposedly a return to his seventies roots, whatever colour they are, with a more mainstream rock sound that incorporates piano, horns, and a forty piece orchestra, while still standing out as strident rock and roll, reminding this jaundiced journo of everything from Cooper circa 'Elected', to the mighty Queensrÿche circa 'Operation Mindcrime'!

Lizzy it seems has finally made the album he always wanted, but was consistently talked out of, performing. As an artistic consequence in the past the poor sod was always one step out in his many, manic strivings for success. The gruesome image and stage show had already been done by Cooper, the conceptual make-up by Kiss, the dual guitar thrashouts by Maiden. Ever had the feeling you've been second guessed?

"Definitely. That was one of my major problems. I was influenced by a lot of things that happened in the seventies, still am, so that's what I wanted to try and recreate. I was attempting to write everything as originally as possible but I always had pressure from the band when we went into the studio to do it a certain way. Somewhere, something got lost everytime."

To my warped intellect it seems strange, and definitely inappropriate, that Lizzy should disband just after 'Visual Lies' his most accomplished album.

"In my opinion 'Visual Lies' didn't get its just desserts and it was the failure of that record to be a commercial success that finally told me to bring matters to a head. That album should have gone crazy and really broken the band. It was a good record that had a lot of fine music. It didn't sound like anyone else but still appeared contemporary. Like we'd been trying for years and nothing was happening and then you put out a record like 'Visual Lies' and you figure *"Okay now they'll listen."* but they didn't! We also had the industry on our hands too, at least in the States. For some reason they just couldn't sell the band. Of course they blamed it on the image, that it was too strong, but the bottom line in anything is the music. That will sell itself, no matter what's behind it. The record company mishandled the whole thing and I think to a point they will admit that. But when success didn't happen the other members of the group literally freaked and got real desperate trying to figure ways of making it. At the time Guns N' Roses were breaking, so they were saying, 'Let's go Guns N' Roses, let's go Dokken" and I wasn't interested in that."

Taking into consideration all the internal wranglings when it came to marketing the old Lizzy and his product, his record company may not have been too thrilled when he told them that he was sacking the band, going solo and about to record an album that eventually would take a year and a half to complete!

"They were worried! They were calling me literally everyday saying, "You have to do something! What's happening?" But I was doing what I wanted at my own pace because if the album bombed I knew it might be the first and last time I would have the chance to do it my way and I wasn't going to rush things. Enigma was in an UTTER panic. They really thought I'd blown it, gone totally insane. Metal Blade were behind me all the way and I'm not sure what Roadrunner were thinking. But now they've heard the record, love it, and suddenly it seems I was right all along! It took awhile to complete because basically I'm very lazy when I write. I want to do all the meat and potatoes and let someone else do the little stuff, like the rhythm behind the lead. Usually I just write the verses and the choruses, so I was a bit put out having to do everything myself and not being able to, er, delegate. I sank the advance money from the record company into buying myself decent equipment to make the original demos and ended up with twenty songs, wanted them all, but finally had to settle for twelve. But it was all MINE and when I finally took it into the studio this protective feeling manifested itself in a really bizarre way. I was so jealous of the material I became very secretive, to such an extent that the two guitarists who played on the album never even met each other until after it was done! They'd come in, I'd play them the demo, they'd learn every bit of it and then they would play it EXACTLY like that. And it was great! You see in the past I'd write something and then let the guitarist interpret it his way and I was never satisfied. But then I HAD to let him have his artistic expression even if it stank! But on this album I paid the guys so they did it my way."

So tell us a bit more about the new image to go with the new sound. It'll be hard throwing over the old one, surely?

DRAMATIC

"I don't want to talk too much about image yet because everyone will see what's happening when the stage show comes round. But to be honest I've tried to change my image for every album and with this one it will be different again. It'll be more on the dark side, more dramatic, and allow me to really ACT on stage. Yet throughout Lizzy Borden's career, the image or persona has been continually misinterpreted. I was never, ever, into a splatter flick sort of violence like Cooper, I always tried to focus more on the bizarre aspects of destructiveness. Unfortunately the video that went out to promote 'The Murderous Metal Roadshow' album pigeon holed me for people as to what I was about and more importantly as to what I could and couldn't be in the future. I was a blood stained maniac for ONE record and ONE tour, but it stuck."

Well to be honest it was always on the tarot cards that it would, Lizzy me old manic tease, but let's talk about the themes running through 'Master Of Disguise'. There are some aren't there?

"I think all the records we've done have been conceptual, you could easily write scripts for them, in fact I have for a couple of the older albums. But I don't like to do concept records as such because it means there are no dimensions, all the songs become about the same things. I do conceptual albums because I like the freedom to tie the songs together one way or another, so that they can stand up on their own but at the same time fit together like pieces in a puzzle. It's also a lot more fun writing in that style. Lyrically 'Master Of Disguise' is very bizarre. I'm playing around with the villain versus hero scenario with the whole album evolving very much as a stage play with definite, distinct acts evolving a strong story line. One of the main themes is never judging too hastily from outside appearances. In the song 'One False Move' we have the villain speaking out, looking into the audience, as it were, and saying "Hey you need me, without me your hero wouldn't look so good, so then who would you cheer for?" It's the bad guy wanting a little respect for what he does, his role. Because in many ways evil is the prime catalyst for good. Without one there wouldn't be the other!"

Even the titles of the last two albums, 'Visual Lies' and 'Master Of Disguise' seem to hint at social camouflage. The never judge an album by its sleeve notes syndrome.

"Listen, living in Hollywood there is always that element of not really knowing people. No matter how much you talk to them they have another life that is different to the one they present publically. And shit, everyone that lives out here realises it. Survive in Hollywood and that's just the way it is. Growing up in that environment naturally reflects in my writing and I like that subterfuge because it adds dimensions to the songs. At first glance you might not understand what I'm really talking about so your forced to dive a little deeper to find out what's really going on. That's why I dislike corporate rock so much, because it tells you exactly what it is. 'Master Of Disguise' musically is not about what's happening now. It's heavily rooted in the seventies, so at least it's different. I could have gone out and done Guns N' Roses, I could easily have done Winger, but this is the album I've always wanted to do ever since I started Lizzy Borden. It just took me awhile to figure out that I'd have to do it on my own"

JOHN DUKE

RONNIE MONTROSE

The Unpredictable World of Mr. Montrose

Respect and recognition sometimes eludes a musician for his entire career. A typical example of an underrated, underestimated muso is guitar player Ronnie Montrose, who used to be the leader of MONTROSE a big US band in the Seventies who featured singer Sammy Hagar.

Ronnie has been hailed as a ground breaking musician, who influenced many bands,including, Van Halen. He's put some great outfits together and created interesting, sometimes controversial music. And yet his career has been marked by disappointments and upsets. We talked to Ronnie to find out what happened and why.

Montrose started out playing with singer Van Morrison, and went on to play with Boz Scaggs, and Edgar Klüsener - er sorry, Winter.

In 1974 he decided to form his own band using his surname. It featured Sammy, Bill Church (bass), and drummer Denny Carmassi. This collaboration resulted in the now legendary debut LP produced by Ted Templeman.

There was a constant nerve-racking musical battle between Sammy's rough vocals and the solid concrete wall of guitar power from Ronnie which made for a memorable album. At the same time Ronnie also formed a band called Gamma which coupled technical expertise with outstanding songs. In recent years Ronnie has also made a name for himself as a solo artist. Apart from his joint vinyl efforts with Montrose and Gamma he's had four solo LPs released. As if this wasn't enough he's also worked as a producer. He's a man for all seasons, yet he is rarely interviewed. All that is now changed as we turn the spotlight on Ronnie Montrose.

ROCK CANDY

Montrose debut LP released in 1974 spawned such classics as 'Rock Candy', 'Rock the Nation',, 'Bad Motor Scooter', and 'Good Rockin' Tonight 'when the world first heard Ronnie's fat and heavy guitar sound. The record was so impressive that four years later, even Van Halen could not deny the strong Montrose influence on their debut LP.

Ronnie told us: *"Ted Templeman produced Van Halen's first LP. Eddie and David Lee Roth wanted to have that same sound that was a feature of my album reproduced on their debut. I'm amazed that even today people are still talking about our first record. As far as I'm concerned it only has three or four good songs on it. Sure everybody has their faves from the old days but when I hear them I think of a time in my life when I grew up rather than a specific sound."*

That first Montrose LP went gold. But nevertheless personal problems between Ronnie and Sammy led to clashes. Sammy threw in the towel after the second album 'Paper Money'. How did Ronnie feel about those days and the problems they had?

"I don't really look back at all. I do see it as a way of growing up. All four members suffered from big ego problems by the way. Not only Sammy and me, it was a mutual problem. We were young and highly explosive. The word 'compromise' was not part of our vocabulary. This could have been why our music was so intense."

With the departure of Sammy Hagar the band's musical direction and sound changed too. What was the philosophy behind the changes?

"If I'd been in it for the money nothing would have been easier than to release 13 duplicate copies of our debut LP. I would have pulled the AC/DC one if you get my drift. Hard, powerful and not too obvious changes. And the fans would have gone berserk. But that wasn't me. I've always wanted to be able to experiment. Although I must admit I wasn't particularly over the moon with the third Montrose album. Producing it myself was a mistake. I shouldn't have have done it. I totally lacked the necessary experience."

OPEN FIRE

After Montrose' fourth album 'Jump On It' Ronnie disbanded and then in 1978 Van Halen hit the streets. That same year Ronnie debut solo LP was issued called 'Open Fire.' A largely experimental record on which he tried out different musical styles, it was heavily criticised. Did this hurt Ronnie?

"Whichever way or whatever sort of music you play it will get either cheered or criticised by the public as soon as you come out with a record. One has to learn to come to terms with the critic as well as the fan. In those days I found out that every one has to learn to come forward with whatever he wants to express. My favourite guitarist is Jeff Beck. But he took made some records where even I don't understand or see the meaning why he bothered or what he meant by them. That's what happened to 'Open Fire' The critics weren't Ronnie Montrose fans. They were into hard rock and heavy metal. They didn't want to hear me experiment. But I have always done things my way. It took many people quite a long time to understand".

Was the experimental nature of 'Open Fire' responsible for the formation of Gamma?

"You have to see these two things separately. While I was in Gamma I was absolutely crazy about the sound of the synthesiser. I wanted to combine and couple its sound with the sound of the guitar."

The first two Gamma albums were of unprecedented quality, and Gamma 2 was a particularly fine piece of work. On Gamma 3 though the band sounded far more commercial. And it seemed that the battle between the guitar and synth was decided in favour of the latter instrument.

"It never had been my intention to place the guitar as the main instrument in Gamma. Certainly not ion the third LP. I merely wanted to hear certain sounds and if that had to come out via a synthesiser that was fine with me. I never saw myself as a guitar hero. Of all the three LPs I personally liked Gamma 3 best. The first one I don't particularly like music at all. I also heard that people go nuts over the track 'Voyager' on Gamma 2, which was recorded live in the studio without overdubs."

DISASTER

Just about two years ago Heart drummer Denny Carmassi (ex-Montrose), told us that in his opinion the reason why Gamma never really broke through was they lacked personaltty. Why did Ronnie think Gamma didn't make it? Incidentally an absurd bummer was that when Gamma 3 entered the American charts, he was in Europe with the band touring with Foreigner. That was when he'd left the band right after a show in London, right?

"Those weren't exactly the happiest days of the band. It was a totally wrong move for us to be in Europe with Foreigner just when our own LP was on the edge of breaking in the US. Most of all that entire tour was one total and big disaster on all fronts. I don't know why that was but we were treated very badly. And as far as that 'Personality' thing was concerned, it's true. There wasn't any. Gamma didn't have an identity partly because I was constantly searching for the right combination of musicians. Another bummer was that when we were in Europe, Denny knew he would leave and play with Heart. Only problem was he didn't bother to fill us in."

We heard the record company was furious with Ronnie for leaving the band while on tour with Foreigner. They then had Gamma thrown off the tour which meant the end of the band, right?

"No, that's not how it happened. My contract had expired. Of course Elektra wasn't pleased with me, but neither was I as a matter of fact! The moment when our presence was needed in the States to support our album the band was abroad. When I decided to leave Gamma I tried to contact people at Elektra but they didn't even want to take my 'phone calls. At that stage I lost all interest. Making music is my hobby. I need to feel the fun and enjoyment. I never looked upon it as being my job or my work. And as I didn't have any fun anymore I didn't have a reason to continue with Gamma, simple as that!"

EXPERIMENTS

The time span of 1962-86 was a bit of an confused period in Montrose' career. Was he in a Seattle band called Rail for a while?

"Yes, that's correct. At that particular time I was again looking for musicians and was very interested in the band's singer and bassist Terry Young. My former manager arranged for me to play a few gigs with them so I could make out for myself how good Terry really was. It didn't work out though. Also around that time I was still playing with Gamma keyboard player Mitchell Froom. We made extremely experimental music, which we performed at schools. None of the record companies dared touch us. We worked with drum machines, computers, synths and guitars. It was pure instrumental music and it sounded like a complete orchestra at work, when it was only the two of us playing all the instruments.

For a while I also did one man shows at schools. I'd play several instruments single handed while I showed films on a huge screen behind me. I also played with the Berklee Symphonic Orchestra. And yet again even then I only did things I felt like doing. And in a way you could say I was 'in search of a musical direction. But I would rather refer to it as 'experimenting with different possibilities'.

On top of that I produced Jeff Berlin's LP 'Champion'. His record company was very thrilled with the result of that album and so they asked me if I had any shelved material I wanted to release. I did and that's how the album 'Territory' came about. It wasn't intended to be a proper LP. All the featured songs were written over the past four years, merely things I'd demo-ed. They're all different from each other, without a common thread holding them together. I was very pleased with the possibility of being able to release that material. It also meant that I hadn't done all that work for nothing. It enabled me to close up that period of my life too."

Ronnie made his come back in 1987. First he produced the Heathen LP 'Breaking The Silence' and then he came out with his own LP 'Mean.' It reminded us of the first Montrose album in the structure and songs. Was there any reason for this similarity?

"I hadn't done a hard rock album for ages and those few gigs I've done with Rail inspired me a lot. So I had those really heavy songs I'd d written, lying around, waiting.I was looking around the small clubs ins each of suitable musicians,. That's when I bumped into a band called Buster Brown. They had been doing some supports for me down in Texas. I produced a demo for them. Unfortunately it didn't do much for the band. Due to that fact the guys hadn't done much of anything except bum around. One day I just called up Johnny Edwards and James Kottak their singer and drummer, and popped the question whether they felt like doing album with me. I also told them it would be a one off. Glenn Latsch I already knew when he was the bassist in Gamma. And so that album didn't do half bad. It did well enough to land James Kottak a spot with Kingdom Come. Johnny joined King Kobra and Glenn formed a new outfit under the banner of New Frontier."

A US TV commercial announced the reunion of MONTROSE. At least that's what Sammy Hagar told us. Problem was - he didn't know anything about. All that was happening then was Ronnie was about to release 'Mean.' What did Ronnie know about this?

"Nothing at all. What I do know is that indeed we had been asked to perform at a charity concert which was organised for a photographer who had just died. But that was after 'Mean' and during the recording of my recent LP 'The Speed Of Sound.'"

Had he ever thought about reforming Montrose?

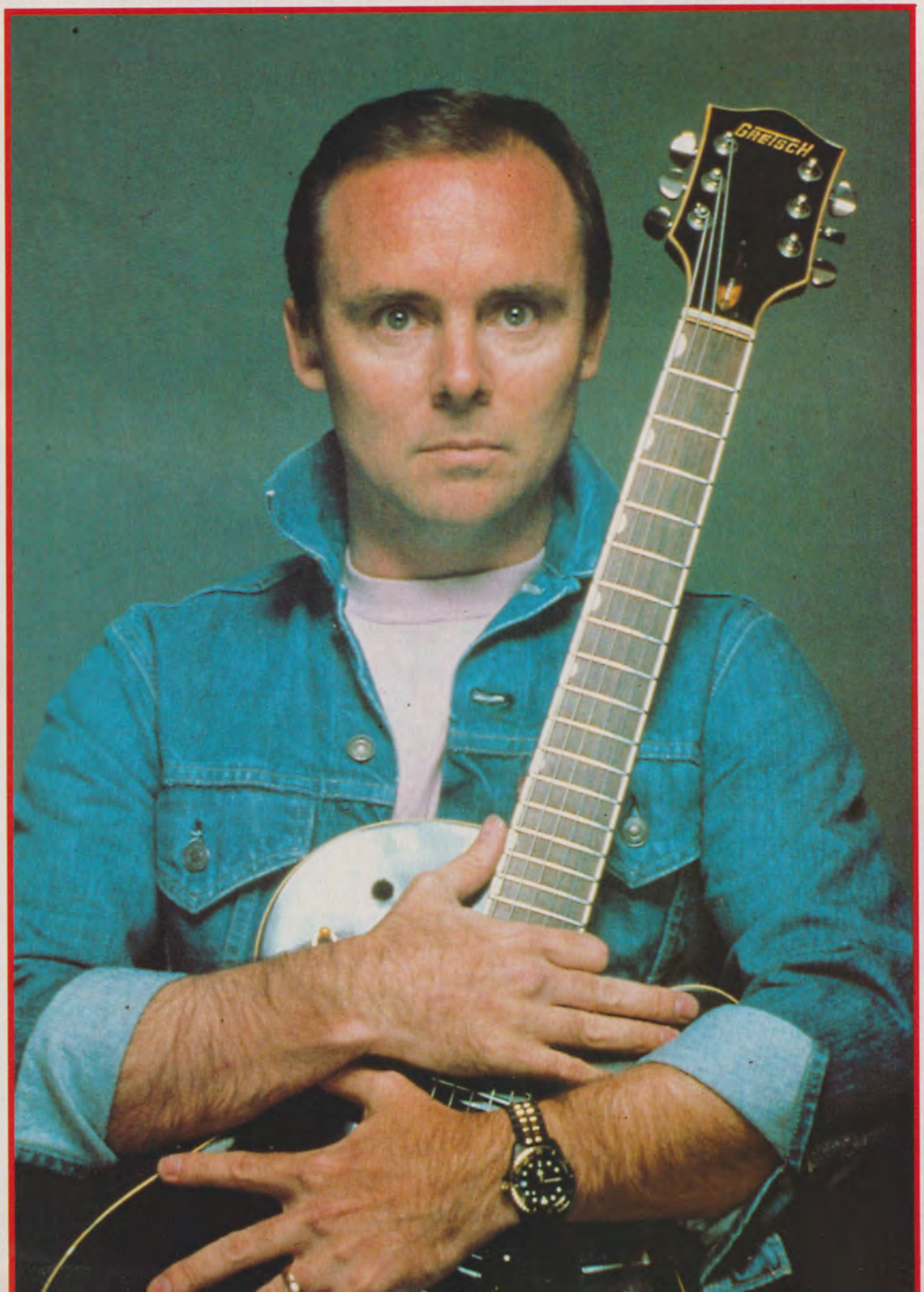
"No. Sammy called me when that concert for that photographer was put together. But I decided against performing. That concert would sell out anyway. And I believe that doing something like that has to mean something. Denny Carmassi called me up too about it to change my mind. Sadly no one had made the effort to ask Bill Church. When I asked about that I heard that one would mind a bit if Bill wouldn't be part of it. My ass. That's not what I call a reunion. What I did say to Sammy though was that I would not mind reforming and performing for a good cause, like the homeless people of San Francisco. Believe me I'd be the first to do that."

His latest LP 'Speed Of Sound' is an instrumental. Doesn't it sound a bit like a movie sound-track?

"That's exactly how it started out. I wanted to record a very heavy guitar track for a movie. I came to the decision with the director of my record company that I should make an all instrumental LP based on strong melodies. All the tracks are joined together, like 'Black Box' and 'Mach 1'. Those are all phrases used in aviation. I'm real happy with the album except I didn't give drummer Johnny Dee Badanjek and bassist Glenn Letsch enough chance to work out their parts to the full. It sounds a bit too stiff."

Ronnie's career has had plenty of ups and downs. Is that because he is difficult to work with? Or is it because of his never ending quest for a new musical challenge? Or is he just plain unpredictable?

"I believe I already answered that question. If you wanna make money you have to be predictable. but as I am an artist I'm prepared to pay the price. Although once in a while one of my projects doesn't satisfy me. In that case I try something different. "



MASTURBATION

Ronnie is a traditional rock guitarist, interested in melody and themes, as opposed to super fast masturbation. How does a veteran like Montrose see the new league of axemen?

"I have a great respect for the talent of Yngwie or Vinnie Moore and their love for the instrument. It all sounds very acrobatic, but alas not very melodic. After one song I have had enough. I only wished they would play something one could remember. "

'Night Of The Guitar' has just been issued in Europe. On the earlier released American version 'Guitar Speak' Ronnie Montrose is featured on the heavy track 'Blood Alley 152' Montrose is about to tour with a pick up band in the States. He was also supposed to produce the new Y&T album but that fell through. Why?

"I've spent four months working with them on their new material, and even wrote a song for them. Everything was arranged when at the last minute it fell through. I think Dave Meiketti was getting afraid his vocals wouldn't turn out that good with me as the producer. He didn't want me around. Of course I had a contract but that has all been taken care of and is settled. I regret this and they are currently in a now or never situation. And as I hope things turn out right for them we're not the best of mates anymore"

We heard they sacked Joey Alves. Was this true?

"I think it is wiser if I'd give no comment about this"

What were Ronnie's plans for the coming months and finally - what was his favourite all time line up to back his guitar work?

(Considerable silence).*"Well it would be great if Ritchie Blackmore would take a break from Deep Purple and go on holiday for a while... I still have this contract with Enigma for a vocal LP. I want it to be a really heavy one and on the back of it I would to go out and tour. I'm look for a good vocalist...!"*

MICHEL VAN DE MOOSDIJK

OWN WORDS

Onslaught

I met up with guitarist Nige Rockett and vocalist Steve Grimmett just before Onslaught started their latest mini British tour, to go over with a fine toothcomb, or a dirty hair brush, the new album, 'In Search Of Sanity'. It was a fine, generally praise worthy meeting of three inebriates which I inadvertently wiped the following day! Still reeling from such overt professionalism Mr. Rockett granted me a second interview after the band had completed the British mini tour and were contemplating an upcoming European. So with a hold all full of paracetamols and my twitching left hand a thousand miles away from the erase switch we did it again!

'The Asylum'

Nige: "That was a track that Stephan Galfas (producer) put together for the album. He did a heavy keyboard intro for Stryper on 'To Hell With The Devil' and we wanted something similar to that on our album. Something that was representative of the title so Stephan came up with an intro that was sick and weird and set the mood! Really you can't get a true impression of it on record because there is so much sub bass on such a very low frequency that the common home stereo just won't pick it up. But live it's so f****n loud it'll shake your stomach!"

'In Search Of Sanity'

"After 'Welcome To Dying' it's my favourite track on the album. The story line concerns someone who though committed to an asylum is not necessarily insane and the song tells the tale of his efforts to convince people of this fact. Unfortunately there is simply no way he can persuade people of his normality because he already has this stigma of being crazy. We tried to represent this frustration in the music, if you listen to the solos on the album they have a lot of weird scales and on the fade out there are some very strange harmonies."

'Shellshock'

"It's the story of a guy who has been forced to fight a war and been damaged by all the bombings and the noise. Consequently he has gone into the trauma commonly known as shell shock. It's following the theme of insanity throughout the album and even though the record is not a concept album there are certain themes running through it and madness and continuing madness is a major one. It was also the first single we released off the album and the reason we chose the song was it has a really strong hook in the chorus, a real chant a long thing. It was also the first song Steve did when he joined the band."

'Lightning War'.

"If your really into it you can read the double meaning. At first it appears to be a straightforward war type song but it also reflects the energy and aggression that the band try to put across on stage. We originally wrote this about two years back but thankfully it stands up well with the newer stuff. It's a very high energy up tempo number and initially Steve had a few problems with the vocals because of the speed. You see it's rather hard to get a lot of emotion and melodies into such a fast song but he cracked it at the end and gave a great performance."

'Let There Be Rock'

"This track finishes the side but along with a lot of other people I don't think it really fits into the album. But it had a job to do for us and as a single it did break into the top fifty so people obviously wanted to buy it! In a sense though it's main inclusion on the album was for marketing purposes. Hopefully this time around the band has given it a more eighties feel."

'Blood Upon The Ice'

"This starts side two and is the first track the band actually wrote for the album and it's a real crunchy, mid tempo song. This is one of the numbers that the group was most pleased with because it's three years old and we've lived with it so long there was a real danger of it getting a little bit stale. But once Steve got to grips vocally he breathed new life into the number and consequently I reckon it sounds really fresh. A good production means it locked in really well with the rest of the tracks. Lyrically because of it's age it is slightly outside the major themes of the album, telling of a man's fight for survival during a post nuclear ice age in a hostile environment."

'Welcome To Dying'

"The thirteen minute ballad! I think lyrically it attempts to describe the thoughts and images that I believe I would feel if I knew I was about to meet my maker in the very near future! We attempted to try and capture all the emotions, ranging from bitter anger to even a sort of blessed relief. Hopefully the music attempts to complement the lyric, to reflect the different moods within the song. As the verses continue there is a real musical tension being built up with all the differing layers of guitars and then when you hit the chorus all this tension gets released in a great explosion. For me it's Steve's finest performance on the album, there is so much feeling there because he really lived the part out! A lot of people said it was a risk to do such a lengthy ballad but as a band we felt we had to take that risk if we wanted to get any real level of success. And the response to the song has been immensely positive so it's obviously paid off!"

'Powerplay'

"This is the final track off the album and in keeping with tradition it's a real up tempo number and probably one of the quickest tracks Onslaught have ever done. I reckon we managed to keep the speed under control and not let it get out of hand but we had to work extremely hard in the studio when we recorded it. There's also some nice melodic soloing going on to offset the heavy riffs. Lyrically it's a straightforward warning against the perils of drug taking. Hopefully it'll make a few people sit up and think. To be honest everyone in the band is just pleased to see the album finished and out in the shops after the time it's taken to finally complete. Now, of course, all the effort seems worth it."

JOHN DUKE

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METAL SHOTS

KINGDOM OF THE (K)NIGHT

Pics.: Steve Schofield

cards and the wolf card keeps coming up. The wolf then runs into the courtyard where Axxis are playing. The king puts on his robes and crown and goes to confront the wolf, who on entering the courtyard turns into the prince (played by Rod O'Grady), *who raises his sword and is crowned the rightful King. The king* (or should I say ex-king) *has a heart attack at his son's feet.*

Although I have yet to see the finished product, the whole concept seemed highly imaginative. German rockers Axxis, now on EMI after their label Enigma was taken over by the recording giants, have yet to release the single over here along with the album which they will promote by supporting Black Sabbath on the UK leg of their tour in September. The single itself? Good catchy rock, similar to the Scorpions' style."

STEVE SCHOFIELD

AXXIS

AXXIS GOTHIC VIDEO FANTASY!

It was a cold, damp Monday afternoon in July *(surprise, surprise)* when a video crew, caterers, make-up artists, people from EMI Records *(both English and German)* made the journey up the long winding roads to Bolton Castle, near Richmond. On the way from the hotel to the location, we told Karen, Axxis' UK press officer, that we hoped there was a roof on the castle and it was not one of these pile of bricks where the only way you can tell it's a castle is by the big sign next to it! As we pulled up at the castle Steve Schofield unloaded his equipment, there wasn't a roof insight. Said Steve *"There were walls, which seemed irrelevant as I pictured my coat hung up in the hotel room some 20 miles away.*

The rain didn't last much longer, and Director Michael Martin from Picture Music International said the dull grey sky would be ideal for the mood of the video, which was to be shot in black and white.

The storyline of the video for Axxis' 'Kingdom Of The Night' is a Gothic fairytale about a 1000 year old king in a 1000 year old castle. The king, played by Geoffrey Harris, sees a raven and fears it as a bad omen. He runs to consult his tarot

U.S. METAL SHARDS

IRON FILINGS

Guns N'Roses, the fearless five, are having some difficulties in their new environs of Chicago, where they are supposed to be preparing their next LP. Apparently, Slash is very unhappy there and desperately wants to go back to Los Angeles, but Axl will not allow the group to prepare a record in the land of decadence. This dissension is putting pre-production on Guns N' Roses next way behind schedule.

Other G 'N R gossip circulating States side is that drummer Steven Adler has recently married. Management denies it, but the rumour is buzzing all over L.A. More news as it develops.

RIOT QUELLED

Another band bites the dust... *"We made a great record and nobody gave a toss,"* comments drummer Frankie Banali on Quiet Riot's last release. Due to fan apathy, Quiet Riot has officially disbanded. In the wake of this event, former Quiet Riot members have already scrambled into other projects. Vocalist Paul Shortino will record a solo album assisted by bassist Sean McNabb. Banali will be drumming on various projects (he's currently on tour with W.A.S.P.). And in a very interesting move, guitarist Carlos Cavazo is replacing Robert Sarzo in Hurricane, where he'll be playing alongside his brother Tony Cavazo. Apparently, Sarzo was released from the band because of serious musical differences.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Ozzy Osbourne remarked on Madonna's controversial 'Like A Prayer' video: *"I swear to God, If I did anything like that I'd be hiding with that Rushdie guy. There's burning crosses, bleeding crucifixes and all kinds of stuff in this video. If I were to do that, I suppose I'd be strung up. Maybe I should have breast implants."*

BREAKTHROUGHS

Dangerous Toys were performing a gig in Phoenix, Arizona when the stage collapsed underneath them. *"The stage was like a trampoline and very spongy right by my mike stand,"* groused bass player Mike Watson, *"I just started stomping, jumped and landed with both feet, and I went right through the floor."*

Kiss are in the studio in L.A. preparing their 23rd LP, which may be titled Crimes Of Passion. The group compiled 14 songs for the new LP, and the album is being produced by Kiss founders Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley.

DETH WHERE ART THOU?

Megadeth -- now a trio consisting of newly sobered Dave Mustaine, bassist Dave Ellefson and drummer Nick Menza -- are in the studio recording a version of Alice Cooper's 'No More Mr. Nice Guy' for the soundtrack to director Wes Craven's newest shock film. Apparently they will recruit a second guitarist before beginning work on their fourth LP.

Whitesnake is currently finishing up their album at Steve Vai's suburban Los Angeles home.

Because of the hullabaloo created when Jethro Tull won the prize of Best Hard Rock Act at the 1989 Grammy Awards, the 1990 awards will now have crunchy music in two separate categories, Hard Rock and Heavy Metal.

The members Van Halen have migrated to their Malibu, California homes for the summer and are preparing for their next opus...to be released in the distant future.

Jailhouse recorded their gig at L.A.'s Roxy for a five song E.P. The proceeds from the effort will go to benefit teenage runaway organizations.

Pretty Boy Floyd recruited two dozen school girls from Baldwin High School in Bryn Maur, Pennsylvania to sing backup vocals on the title track of their debut LP 'Cock, Rock, Shock, Pop.'

The first effort of the newly-formed Los Angeles chapter of the Black Rock Coalition is to hold a benefit on July 29th featuring Black Sheep, Eye & I, Gangland, and Heart Of One. Living Colour's Vernon Reid hosted the event held at the Music Machine. The benefit was held to get Jimi Hendrix a star on the Hollywood Walk Of Fame. (Peter Frampton already has a spot)

Black Sabbath's original skins basher Bill Ward is working with the brilliant Jack Bruce on a project called Ward One. Ozzy Osbourne contributes vocals on the tracks 'Bombers (Can Open Bombays)' and 'Jack's Land.' Look for a year end release.

After seven years together, the members of Hades have parted ways due to personal differences. Former Hades vocalist Allan Tecchio is now singing with Texas experimentalists Watchtower. Watchtower has just signed to Noise Records.

Ace Frehley is working on his next album in New York with producer Eddie Kramer and a host of others, including former Kissmate Peter Kriss, who does drums on 'Trouble Walking.' Skid Row did backing vocals on 'Trouble Walking,' 'Back To School,' 'Too Young To Die.' Look for October release.

Keel have recruited guitarist Tony Kalmucci and a yet- to-be-named keyboardist and are finishing their next LP, 'Larger Than Live' for Atlantic/Gold Mountain. The LP will be half live and half studio and feature the radio-oriented single 'Dreams Are Not Enough.'

HOT WAX

Little Ceaser are planning on recording their Geffen debut with Bob Rock. The Killer Dwarfs are working with Andy Johns.Sanctuary will be working with Howard Benson.Former Megadeth guitarist Chris Poland will release an instrumental LP later this year.

Overkill are recording their fourth full-length album with Terry Date at Carriage House Studios in Connecticut. Mother Love Bone will be covering the Argent hit 'Hold Your Head Up' on their Polygram debut album. (Do they know about Uriah Heep's version?) And finally, Atrophy go into the studio with Bill Metoyer in August to record Too Late To Change.

SIGNINGS

Elektra is claiming their rights on two of Dokken's offshoot groups. Since Dokken still had two years left to their contract, in its stead Elektra has signed George Lynch's latest project Lynch Mob featuring Lynch, former Dokken mate Mick Brown, ex-Ferrari vocalist Oni Logan. No bassist has yet to be chosen. Elektra has also picked up Don Dokken's new project. Don, who has just finished producing French metallers XYZ, will produce his group (currently called Don Dokken) which features guitarists John Norum (ex-Europe) and Billy 'The Kid' White, bassist Patrick Young (ex-Black 'N Blue), and drummer Mickey Dee (ex-King Diamond). The record company passed on their option to sign Jeff Pilson's latest project Flesh And Blood, although the album is almost finished.

Armoured Saint have signed to Mika Records and Los Angeles soulrockers Lunchbox have signed to Bug Records while Mechanics records has signed New Jersey's Trixter. Forbidden has signed on Tim Calvert as lead guitarist. He replaces Glen Alvelais.

The newest metal label in the states is Grudge Records, and their first act is Dead Ringer.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Andy McCoy (ex-Hanoi Rocks) is looking for a vocalist. He'd like a rock singer (not metal) with plenty of attitude who is into old electric blues and the Stones. Harmonica ability is a plus. Send all demos to:

Andy McCoy
c/o Gold Mountain
P.O. Box 2568
Hollywood, CA 90078

WARNING BELLS AND WEDDING BELLS

One veteran musician who was hanging around with Skid Row when the quartet was in Vancouver recently commented about vocalist Sebastian Bach, *"He's heading 100 miles per hour toward a brick wall. It's going to happen, it's just uncertain which way the slimy blob goes when he hits it. He's 20, and he's partying like a fiend, so hopefully when he hits it he can deal with it and carry on."*

Dark Angel vocalist Ron Rinehart married in Los Angeles on July 8th...Lita Ford and Chris Holmes were married in Los Angles in 17th June in a private ceremony. W.A.S.P. lead vocalist Blackie Lawless wasn't informed of the union until after the fact.

VIDEO NEWS

Kreator attempted to record their video for 'Betrayer'at the Acropolis in Athens, Greece. Unfortunately the dudes didn't get a permit, so when they arrived they were formerly ushered out. That night they hopped the fence and did their thing.

JODI SUMMERS

SHAH

KINGS OF EASTERN THRASH

International understanding it was not. In fact we needed an interpreter to help us communicate with Shah singer/guitarist Antonio Garcia, and the poor girl was doing all the talking! It was a completely new experience. Antonio was beginning to get fed up with explaining to everyone what life behind the iron curtain was like . And when we had the clever idea of asking him why he didn't just stay in the West, he declined dramatically. Apparently he doesn't like it here at all.

He still drank Coca Cola mind you, as a small appreciation of Western 'decadence' and one of his dreams would be to tour the States with a major band. Especially as he thinks Shah's music sounds pretty American.

He's right. Like most of the Eastern European bands to have emerged recently, Shah have the habit of looking Stateside for influences in their music, and you can hear it!

And Shah have frequently been accused of lacking any real identity, as have a number of other Russian bands. Their debut LP 'Beware' was compared primarily to American bands like Anthrax and Metallica. Considering that most thrash metal these days is just a poor copy of something that was done better beforehand anyway, it could be interesting to take a closer look at a band with their 'roots' in Russia.

Antonio doesn't see things quite that way, because he thinks that the American scene is 'not bad at all' and wants to continue aiming for the American sound. Although there are bands in the Soviet Union, who orientate their sound towards their own style of music, he finds that 'too boring.'

He didn't seem to happy with the bands' debut album that was produced in Germany under the guiding hand of Valeri Caina!

"The production had to be completed really quickly, and the record sounds a bit messy at times, it doesn't flow. 'Beware ' is too traditional in every aspect. That's in regards to the lyrics as well as the music. As things stand, we can't really complain about the album, but we want to make the next one a lot better.. We'd like to record the next LP in Germany as well."

This one will probably be available all over Europe as well, everywhere but the Soviet Union, although the band are a lot more popular over there than they are here.

Double standards? Antonio explained why: *"We're trying to get a deal for Russia, but we haven't got very high hopes. A lot of things, may have changed, but it's still difficult to release a record over there ... at least up until now it has been."*

Kruiz (with whom they share the same management) managed to...

"Kruiz have been around for a long time and used to play more pop music - that's the kind of stuff they've released as well.. They only took on their current style a few years ago, and they've only released two albums since, that aren't even that good. You mustn't forget that Kruiz released their records in Russian, whereas we sing in English. And its almost impossible to release an album in English over there."

He can still live solely from his music, because: *""I earn my living by playing concerts. We've got at least four gigs a months. And I earn 150 Roubels on average for each concert (about 150 pounds). It's difficult with equipment, because you can't buy equipment in the Soviet Union, and if, then its really expensive. We had to rent the equipment used recording the album."*

His thoughts on the Russian and the European scene: *"I noticed that fans seem to know a lot more about the bands and about the music, mainly because they don't have much access to the records, most of which are available via the black market. So they make a real effort, and have a completely different attitude to things than people in the West. What I like over here is that fans really do what they want to do during concerts. They are more extrovert, show how much they enjoy the music. We normally have two kinds of people at our gigs: the one lot behave really well, and just sit down and watch the band, whereas the other group go ape and start rioting. There doesn't seem to be any compromise at all."*

Antonio noticed one other big difference:

"Life is much faster in the Soviet Union, its more tense. Everything here is quite mellow, the people are so quiet, and they're always really careful to always do everything right. Everything is governed by rules over here. Things is more chaotic at home, like in the jungle. I don't like the way things are so neat and tidy here."

Sounds a pretty weird statement to me, but I suppose Antonio knows what he's on about...

ANDREA NIERADZIK

A TOUCH OF EASTERN PROMISE

It was a nerve wracking moment for attractive singer Gudrun Laos. Her brand new, debut album was about to be played to a roomful of hard-bitten music industry chiefs. Dependant on how they reacted to the music and the image, was the future of the band. Certainly they could see that in Gudrun Laos they had a beautiful and slightly mysterious blonde who could arouse red blooded men to emit anguished howls and leap over tables, beating their chests, Tarzan fashion.

It was the hottest day of the year, and Gudrun had a record to play us that matched the temperatures. For as the tapes began to roll in the control room at a studio in West London, it quickly became evident that a brilliant album has been concocted under the Laos name. It was introduced to us by rock tycoon Uwe Block who explained that Laos was a German band with an English girl singer who had recorded their album at Hotline Studios, Frankfurt. It's very much an international project and so it was fitting that there should be present big wigs from far flung corners of the record industry. They sat tapping non-committal fingers as the music blasted from massive speakers, while Gudrun perched on a chair behind the mixing desk.

What we heard was immensely powerful, beautifully recorded, blasting heavy rock featuring one of the best vocalists heard in many waxings of the moon. And soon even the most hard bitten of industry chiefs was heard to exclaim: *''Great vocals!''*

LAOS

SOLID RIFFS

Indeed they were and the band had a biting edge that suggested they were top class pro players. My first reaction was to think of Def Leppard as the first cut was heard, and later I discovered that the sessions had taken place at studios used by mighty Leppard. It was also suggested to me later that the band on the record were session men, but whoever it is playing, Laos as an entity is responsible for some mighty vibrant and exciting music, with great tunes and and solid riffs.

Gudrun admitted to me that the line up for touring won't be the same guys featured on the record. *''The band is not quite complete yet. We haven't got a bass player or drummer. We are working on it right at this second in fact. I am going to Germany for some heavy rehearsals. We put the album together using some extra help from friends. We started the band three years ago. We did a few gigs in London but mainly we wanted to concentrate on writing and we sat down to find the best songs we could possibly get and really develop it. We know we are good at playing live but we wanted to concentrate on what we*

pic.: Reinhard Harms

thought was important."

Gudrun has been singing in bands for ten years, since she was 13 in fact, and she also plays bass guitar and keyboards. *"I've got quite a good musical knowledge and I'm not just a singer. I used to have my own bands, but nobody you would remember! Actually I used to be in an all girl band called She about three years ago with Tracy Lamb who was later in Rock Goddess and now Girlschool. All the girls were very temperamental and headstrong. You have to be as girls in the rock business but it got too unbearable. People fell out with each other and that was it. It had a lot of potential at the time."*

Gudrun is English although some spies have tried to tell me she is in fact German. Which ever part of the world she comes from, she speaks and sings beautifully! *"My great great grandfather on my father's side actually came from Laos. He went right over Russia and settled in Estonia, one of the Baltic states. They must have adopted the name Laos to prove their identity. Gudrun is actually a Scandinavian based name. You see my mother is German and the German's adopted the name, so its a typically North German name. My dad was Estonian but he's dead now. I'm a bit of a mongrel!"*

Gudrun can speak German and English - flawlessly, but not the language of Laos, which is one of those Far Eastern countries bordered by Vietnam and Cambodia. Actually I'm guessing here as my old schoolboy's Atlas of the world has been covered in jam and cold tea.

"There is a Laotian language but I haven't got a clue how to speak it," says Gudrun. *"I have never actually been out of Europe. The band became my baby after the two German founders, the bass player and keyboard player came over to England with the specific intention of finding a female English singer to help them with lyrics. We met in a pub in Putney. Really romantic! I was looking for a band and they wanted a singer and it went from there. We tried to get a deal a few years ago but it didn't work out. We had to keep trying and we had a lot of confidence in our abilities."*

The band's line up include Ralf Hansmeyer on guitar, and Wolfgang Shindler on keyboards.

"Derek Jeffery helps us arrange and develop the music. It's great to have someone outside the band who can look at the music objectively and give pointers to where we are going wrong. It works very well as a unit. "

GUDRUN'S VOICE

When they started the band played a lot of small gigs in Germany and France and they did a show case for record companies in London at the Astoria. *"We really thoroughly enjoyed that. It was a great night. But as I said we have concentrated more on the writing. The four of us wrote all the songs between us. We write the lyrics together with Derek. Obviously for the Germans its difficult for them too speak English."*

Listening to the album I was impressed by the power, range and passion of GUDRUN'S voice and am frankly amazed that she hasn't been 'picked up' before and isn't already a giant star. I can see her now on heavy rotation on MTV with entire window displays of her album in record stores across all quarters of the civilised globe. And perhaps even in uncivilised quarters, the natives will be clamouring for Gudrun posters and CDs of the album. Certainly with songs like 'Now That It's Over' there are plenty of potential hit singles. The latter song makes you want to link arms, sway back and forth and hold up flaming cigarette lighters - and that's just in your bedroom.

"I'll come clean, I'd love it to be a single," says Gudrun smiling. *"It's my favourite song."*

HARD-CORE

Another potential single is the first track, the block busting 'I Want It' and this is the kind of heavy rock that will be breaking out over the league of rock nation's ears, come September. This will be followed by a European tour later in the year.

Tracks on the album will include 'Now That It's Over,'and 'We Called it Love', two powerful ballads which typify Laos' varied approach to material. *"It's not all screaming, so any mood you are in you can find something to listen to. That was my intention from the start. So many albums have the same tone all the way through. We are aiming at a broader audience than hard-core heavy metal. There are a lot of American rock influences in there and we want to capture the American market obviously. I'd say our music was heavy to medium rock. It's hard to categorise. I want to go on developing as an artist though. I hope in say ten years time I'll be a lot, lot better. I want to be as good a singer and songwriter as possible. I want to write the classic songs of the future. That's my dream. This is a good start and it can be built on. So I'm really looking forward to the future."*

Gudrun will probably play rhythm guitar and bass on stage as well as singing when the band hits the road and realises she will be the focal point for audiences.

"I suppose that is inevitable. Lead singers tend to be with any band. But it will be a whole-band feeling. It won't be a Lita Ford or Doro Pesch situation where all the attention is on the lead lady."

I hoped she didn't mind when I compared Laos sound to Def Leppard, particularly on the first number.*"No, not at all. That's a compliment. I spotted the similar guitar sound quality too. I suppose its because our music is not always on one level and builds up. We had a limited time and budget to make the album and we made the best we could of it. When most bands get to their third album they come into their own and find their direction and style and all the things going for them, That's when they make their killer album. So I am not expecting this to be the best album we'll make. That'll come later."*

It sounded to me like 'Laos' was a killer album already. And Gudrun is a star in the making. But she sounds a note of caution when my praise becomes too fulsome.

"Lady singers do tend to make the mistake of being all sex appeal and too little talent. I like sex appeal and I'm not a nun in a closet, but I hope I can gain some success. I've got my fingers crossed and I've worked very hard for success. I hope that comes across. As a singer I use my own technique and style and try not to copy anybody. Most of my favourite singers are male - David Coverdale and Lou Gramm of Foreigner who has a lovely rich voice and can also scream his head off."

Gudrun began singing when she was 'tiny' and later when she was in a choir. She feels her natural singing voice is more like one of the girls from Abba, very precise. Her rock'n'roll voice happened 'overnight' when discovered a way of doing it.

"It's the most exciting music to sing. I've sung all sort of styles but they don't turn me on. Rock does, especially on stage. It gets very intense and people come away with that feeling of complete energy being generated. So its not gimmicky. It's one hundred per cent raw energy."

Gudrun is a very beautiful, intelligent and talented lady. But would she be able to cope with the coarser elements who infest our beloved audiences? Could she put up with the shouts of imbeciles, for example?

"Oh yeah, I love hecklers. It's good fun. I've played some audiences that were really rough. But I'm quite confident I can cope. I'm fearless." **CHRIS WELCH**

Loadsaletters!

You've heard what we've got to say about the state of the world, rock, metal and Karen's suntan. Now it's your turn to blast off about the things that are bugging you. And if you want to write a scathing epistle, drop us a line to

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WEIRD SIGHTINGS

Just recently I was driving to a thrash gig with my boy friend Ron, when we took a detour across country. Ron decided he knew a short cut, but the landscape began to look very strange and unfamiliar beneath the moonlight. *"Funny, I don't recognise this bit"* he muttered. Suddenly there was a brilliant glare and roaring noise. *"Oh my Gawd, what is it Ron?"* I gasped clutching his knees. *"Blimey Eth"* he croaked. *"I think its a Flying Saucer!"*

This huge silver disc landed beside us and out got a monster in a silver mask, who invited us to go for a ride to the ionosphere.

Using a translating device he gabbled *"I would like to experiment on some earthlings. I believe your so-called Heavy Metal music may be destroying our ozone layer".*

With great presence of mind Ron grabbed his cassette player and switched on a selection from Obituary's 'Slowly We Rot'. The creature gave a piercing scream and fled, his UFO accelerating vertically at Mach 3. We told all our friends about our weird experience, but so far absolutely no one has believed a word we say.

ETHEL BORLEY, The Rectory, Neasden.

Ethel - we meant you no harm. Ed.

LEG UP

Crimson Glory were awesome when I saw them at the Majestic Reading a while back. By the way, I was the one who touched Ben Jackson's leg and he smiled at me.

VORQUENNIA,
Reading, Berks.

NOBODY is called Vorquennia. Ed

FAN MAG FUSS

When are you going to do some decent Fan Mags? The only decent ones have been Bon Jovi, Europe, Def Leppard, Metallica and Kiss. When are you going to do Mötley Crüe, Poison and White Lion?

P. COPPELL, Liverpool.

When we feel like it. Ed.

MARS BAR

Mick Mars capable of *"Incredibly fast and furious solos that blow your mind"*? (Gez, Newport, South Wales). Gimme a break! The man is a joke. He quite simply cannot play, and is probably one of the most talentless individuals on the hard rock scene today. When I think of the amount of guitarists (myself included), who could blow Mick away, it really pisses me off. Come on 'Gez'don't write in about things you obviously know nothing about.

JAMES BOSWELL, Cheshire.

SARCASM CORNER

Oh how I agreed with Sarah and Emma's reference (issue 13), to Donington as a *"sanctuary for metal fans"*.

Probably the most wonderful thing about belonging to the U.K.'s delightful rock'n'roll community is the annual opportunity to pay over sixteen pounds to stand in a muddy field, crushed by semi-literate neanderthals who smell like sun baked buffalo shit, while being showered with their various bodily secretions. Here we watch tiny figures on a distant stage as we are engulfed in a wall of sound that sounds more like a faulty transistor radio three blocks away. At what other time of the year do the different subcultural groups within the metal fraternity gather to constructively criticize and discuss the merits of each other's music (i.e. throw bottle so urine at one another)? Isn't it just so cool being a rocker?

JONATHAN PARRIS,
Northfield, Birmingham.

Prize letter. Clare - got anything good in the goodies bag? Ed.

STOP THE WAR

I appeal to everybody to act together and stop the violence at gigs before it stops rock'n'roll. Fans and security men should get together to find ways to stop it. Now!

MICHAEL MATKOWSKI,
Southampton, Hampshire

PEACE DECLARED

When I went to see Onslaught at the Bristol Hippodrome the security was brilliant. The guys weren't out to break heads but to make sure the fans were safe. They were catching the divers (there were plenty of them), and I would like to thank the security guys for a safe moshing evening.

COLIN JARRATT,
Weston Supermare, Avon.

A CZECH IN THE POST

I am a big fan of rock and heavy metal and sometimes I can read Metal Hammer here in Czechoslovakia. I think its the best HM magazine in the whole world. Meanwhile can you tell me about Deep Purple and Whitesnake? When are their new albums coming out? And what about some tours? Best wishes.

RENE SYRINKEK,
Karlovy, Vary, Czechoslovakia.

Ah, Rene, we were rather hoping you could help us out with that one. We are all eagerly awaiting news from both bands. Ed.

MEGALIFE

I must say how pleased I was to hear Megadeth are getting themselves sorted out. Their chemically induced problems were destroying them and their career and I'm sure I'm not the only one eagerly awaiting their next opus. Despite what anyone says, Dave Mustaine is a genius, a true musician and composer, the perfect spokesman for our times. Ellefson is grossly under rated as a bass player and also deserves more recognition. But for goodness sake - get a stable line up! Long live Megadeth.

NICK WATTS,
Melksham, Wilts.

A stable line up - do you mean they should get in some guys from Horse? Ed.

THE HOLE TRUTH

I am surprised at the number of groups whose jeans are full of holes - like Wolfsbane, Overkill, and Vamp. Are they so broke they can't afford patches, or are their knees in need of air conditioning? I think we should be told.

TRACY O'HARA, Dublin, Eire.

BLEEP BLEEP!

Hi guys! I was flying over your country recently and met a nice young couple with a keen interest in music. Unfortunately they had to terminate our conversation rather abruptly, just when I wanted to examine - er ask them a few questions. I wonder, if any readers have heard of Ron and Eth from Neasden, and can give me their full address, I'd be very grateful... zorg, krah, blurp... damn this translating device.

AL IAN,
6O Million Light Years Hence.

MAN OF MYSTERY

Some years ago I was visiting my aunt in Brighton when she invited me to a rock 'club'. I had never been to such a place before, but I was intrigued by the whole experience. I was particularly puzzled by the man holding the guitar, who swivelled his hips and sang an item called, I think it was 'Heart Break Hotel.'Later he began to warble what sounded suspiciously like 'Jailhouse Rock'. I tried to gain the man's attention during the intermission and we actually had a drink at the bar. He confided that he was an American on a private visit to Britain and was so addicted to this 'rock'n'roll' (as he called it) that he couldn't resist performing. He seemed a striking sort of fellow, with sideburns, a white suit covered in silver decorations and a deep Southern accent. I was impressed by his polite good manners and many tales of his days as a GI. I was going to give him my address, hoping to keep in touch, but he was swept away in the crowd, and I've never seen him since. I wonder, do any of your readers have any idea who this chap could be?

DR.PEREVAL GOODGE,
Islington, London.

BE POSITIVE

I'm getting pretty sick of reading negative thoughts about the music scene from guys in groups. What's the use of moaning about record companies and radio stations? If the scene is so bad for rock bands why don't they form their OWN united co-op of bands to make their own records, and release them. They could also set up a community rock radio station. Instead of spending all their money down the pub, they could plough it back into a self help organisation and so launch their careers without waiting for help that may never come.

STELLA FORD, Sandwich, Kent.

Clever old thing, ain'tcha. Ed.

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Soundcheck

	average rating Ø	CHRIS WELCH	MARK DAY	REINHARD HARMS	JOHN DUKE	KAREN SEEKINGS	VALERIE POTTER	LIZ EVANS	CHARLOTTE PLENT (Reader)	JOEY + TERRY (Trixx Federation)
WOLFSBANE Live Fast, Die Fast	4,33	3	5	5	3	5	4	4	5	5
DIRTY LOOKS Turn Of The Screw	3,55	4	3	4	4	2	3	4	4	4
LION Trouble In The City	3,22	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	4
TESTAMENT Practice What You Preach	3,11	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	2	1
HARTER ATTACK Human Hell	3,00	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	2	2
FUGAZI Margin Walker	2,88	2	3	2	4	4	2	2	4	3
HEAD EAST Choice Of Weapons	2,77	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	4	3
LIZZY BORDEN Master Of Disguise	2,55	3	1	3	4	3	2	2	2	3
HORSE Diesel Power	2,55	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	3
SWEET SIN Sweet Sin	2,33	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	2
LIGHT FORCE Mystical Thieves	2,11	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2
JET RED Jet Red	1,88	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	3	2

[1] = Putrid [2] = Dodgy [3] = Not Bad [4] = Brilliant [5] = Utterly Incredible

WOLFSBANE'S TRIUMPH

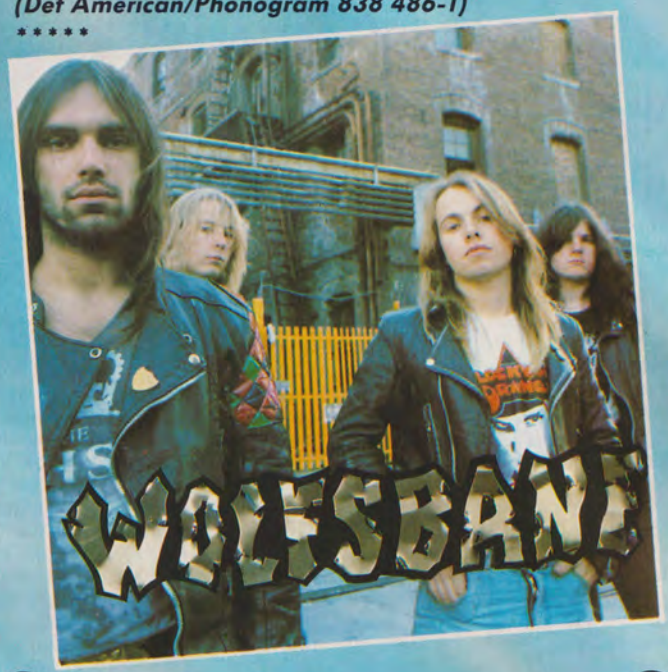
So here we are again Soundcheckin'. Various staff members have crawled out of various drunken hazes, (Hi John), left the tawdry embraces of rather ambiguous companions, (Hi Mark), or ceased toying with their train sets (Hi Chris). Well, I must say readers, today we have been treated to a plethora of succulent aural sweetmeats that had individual staff members all showing unique gestures of appreciation. Both Mark Day and Reinhard Harms lifted up quite extraordinary parts of their anatomy to the mighty debut album from those taste mongers extraordinaire, Wolfsbane, whereas John Duke was seen leaping majestically across the office table tops clutching pictures of Lizzy Borden and various members of Testament to his chest. The boy looked almost beatific. Even our esteemed editor, went rather mottled clutching a copy of Dirty Looks' newest album and mumbling something about good old fashioned rock and roll, started to make speeches, shouting "We'll fight them in the beaches, just once more over the tops lads," from atop the CD player. Wolfsbane were voted the highest scores, followed by the excellent Dirty Looks album 'Turn Of The Screw'. Other high ratings went to Lion, Testament, and Harter Attack, but doing less well with our panel of experts were 'Fugazi', and even dear old 'Lizzy Borden' who should have scored better. The much vaunted 'Horse' didn't gallop much beyond the stable door, while 'Sweet Sin', 'Light Force' and 'Jet Red' were all given the thumbs down. Let's hope this info helps next time you're down at the record shop. If not. Tough.

GEORGE GUBBINS

BEST OF ALL

WOLFSBANE

'Live Fast, Die Fast'
(Def American/Phonogram 838 486-1)
*****



Well f*** me sideways if it's not *''four b*st*rds from hell''* ***((c) Sam Holliday, Tamworth rock guru)***, *''previously considered unemployable slime from the Midlands''* ***((c) N.M.E.)*** now finally unleashed, with foaming jaws, Brown Ale in their hands and old copies of Fiesta littering the back of the tour van ***((c) me!)***.

The album has arrived!

Speaking as a confirmed Howling Mad Shithead, I've got to confess that I was genuinely worried before I heard this monster for the first time. Could the b*st*rds let us down at the last hurdle? Could they f***! It's as ragin', blisterin' and gung-ho as you could ever want.

As befits a band who've slogged around in a horrible transit van, lived on greasy chips 'n' Brown Ale and played to almost anyone who'd stand still long enough to listen, give Wolfsbane a chance to strut in a decent studio and show off and they grab it! If they'd spent their time off in glitzy nightclubs and showbiz ligs that hour on stage or in the studio would never seem so utterly precious and that, darlings, is what puts Wolfsbane long haired head 'n'shoulders above *anything* operating in the South East at the moment.

All adolescent hard-ons, headbanging in front of the bedroom mirror and dreaming about fast women, fast cars and fast guitars, Wolfsbane are the embodiment of the aspirations of every smalltown band in Britain. *''If you don't like my tape, there's an S.A.E., It's all I could afford, cos it's all I wanna be''* hollers Blaze Bayley on 'All Or Nothing' and the biggest irony is that Phonogram did turn down the Tamworth whirlwind's tape, only to pick them up as part of Rick Rubin's 'Def American' package.

From the mental, howlin' 'Manhunt' onwards, 'Live Fast, Die Fast' is frantic metal, with minimal gaps between the tracks for breath. As for the much anticipated 'power ballad' 'Tears From A Fool'? Even it's got big hairy bollocks to go with a broken heart.

I think a curry's in order here. If this album genuinely leaves you unmoved, I suspect you're already dead.

MARK DAY

SPECIAL TIP

ALICE COOPER

'Trash'
(CBS tape)
* or *****

Alice Cooper's last couple of albums, 'Constrictor' and 'Raise Your Fist...', were notable for the tasty, blood 'n' effect soaked tours that came with them and little else. You know it, I know it, and Alice knows it. But rather than running even further up a dead end alley of numb pseudo-metal with He-Man guitarist Kane Roberts, the Coop's obviously kept an eye on the solo success of former bass player Kip Winger and decided to carve himself a slice of the teeny-rock market.

Being a shrewd ol' boy, Al's went for help, straight to the Baron Frankenstein who finally put life into the dead corpse of pre-'Slippery When Wet' Bon Jovi. Enter one Desmond Child, ready to attach the electrodes to either side of the Alice bonce and pass through a current of pure power pop rock.

The end result? It lives! The head of Alice Cooper sewn onto the body of zit-free zone Jon Bon Thingy for what must surely result in the best selling Alice album for a long time. So five stars if ya like the perfect-dental-work rock of Bon Jovi, but just one if you were expecting vampire bite from the old slag. Not that I'm complaining, it's solid rock bluster with choruses in all the right places. Look, there goes the chorus for 'Living On A Prayer' running towards 'Bed Of Nails' on side two for a start...

It's nice to see ex-boozer Alice crooning along with ex-drug fiend Steven Tyler of Aerosmith on the de-toxified 'Only My Heart Talking'. That either of them has a heart beating is amazing enough under the circumstances.

Meanwhile, having seen all his best material recycled to provide Alice with his much needed hit the New Jersey kid turns up himself to make an appearance on the title track, and even joins in on the songwriting front with 'Hell Is Living Without You'. All that is missing is a good dose of *''na na na na, na na na, na na na''* stuff.

At the end of the day *(guv)*, it's not an original or dangerous move, but it's certainly an entertaining one. I'm sure long time followers of Alice's more *bizarre* works will be appalled, but let's face it, he's about to enjoy his biggest audience in years so I doubt he'll let the loss of a few die-hards hurt him too much.

MARK DAY

LPs

DIRTY LOOKS
'Turn Of The Screw'
(WEA Advance Tape)
****

Personnel wise Dirty Looks are spread out all across the Eastern seaboard. 'Turn Of The Screw' follows 'In Your Face' and the immense 'Cool From The Wire' and is in many ways traditional down and dirty raunch that has its tap roots ground firmly in the blues and comes on like an AC/DC mish mash of 'Highway To Hell' and 'Powerage' somehow updated to NOW. It's obvious that the lads from down under are the bands main point of reference *(now under the same management)* with lead singer and guitarist Henrik Ostergaard sounding uncannily like the late lamented Bon Scott on tracks such as 'Love Screams' and 'Slammin' To The Big Beat'.

So, Dirty Looks pump out and perpetuate ages old rock and roll with balls that ain't adverse to swinging a little boogie, but their strength is the ability to knock out time after time great choruses and riffs that illuminate the seedier part of the Aerosmith, Rose Tattoo and even Guns N' Roses end of the market. They also have the same no nonsense here it is, swallow it whole or not at all, attitude, which should be taken to all the best things in life. So, if you are into AC/DC around Highway to Hell', 'Powerage' , and enjoy tracks that sound like 'Problem Child' cross fertilised with 'Boogie Around The Bush', and dirty, dirty riffs that match the lyrical content, with titles like 'Hot Flash Jelly Roll' 'C'Mon Frenchie' and 'Slammin' To The Big Beat', then this is for you.

'Turn Of The Screw' is also blessed with a great production, the sort of thing that old Mutt Lange used to dish out. Listen to the drums and bass pedal on 'Take What You Get', and you can't but be reminded of the great Phil Rudd and the legendary intro to 'Highway To Hell'. Dirty Looks are a band that have power, melody, and great songs, prerequisites that are at a premium in any field. Rock and roll that sucks a legendary sap from its roots, all guitars and *"F**k you!'* stances. Best tracks? Well, the mighty 'Slammin' To The Big Beat', 'Love Screams' and the slower sustained menace of 'Go Away'. Massive power riffing, late night bar room melodies, stained vocals. Brilliant. Buy or stay up all night with a jippy tummy.

JOHN DUKE

LION
'Trouble In Angel City'
(Grand Slamm)
***

Grand Slamm are putting a lot of emphasis on the fact that Lion are padding quite happily along the same well worn musical trail as was blazed by White Lion. It seems to be a major plus point for them and taking into account my low life opinion of Mr Tramp and company they're very lucky that I disagree with the comparison. 'Trouble In Angel City' is Lion's second album and it's pretty obvious from the title that they are based in California, LA, where it appears things are not all that they should be. Side One is definitely the weaker of the two with the inclusion of Slade's 'Lock Up Your Daughters' a dire mistake. Lion take the original, which was no great shakes in the first place, a rather unwieldy little beastie, and flatten it with layered vocals and various keyboard flounces, which Slade, if my booze addled memory is sloping around properly, were never THAT noted for. So what you get is run of the mill radio rock, LA/FM time, lots of carefully scraped clean riffs and painstakingly manicured solos. Yet it's all very professionally and competently done. Best track on side one has to be 'Love is A Lie' containing the meatiest chorus of the lot and a set of cloned riffs that finally appear to wake up to a fearsome individuality. Lion's first album, 87's 'Dangerous Attraction' was a reasonable debut and 'Trouble In Angel City' is somewhat of an improvement. Yet as four separate artists the band do appear to be rather faceless, with no especial talents except for the dependable songwriting abilities and vocal strains of one Kal Swann, who comes on a bit like Coverdale and on occasion writes along much the same themes. Take the track 'Stranger In The City' lyrics a la *"Standing in the shadows, Looking for love,"* Don't we all David. In fact the Scottish Mr Swann is one of Britain's more praise worthy exports and considering that he first sniffed the light of a hot studio with the appalling NWOBHM band Tytan I should say has done rather well for himself. Better band, better weather and certainly better hairstyle. 'Hungry For Love' is the next standout number with a mighty, mighty riff and almost Kissian overtones leading to an utterly gonzoid chorus.

The dodgiest moment has to be the ballad 'Lonely Girl' whose saving grace is its brevity, while the final track 'Forgotten Sons' perhaps shows the future for Lion if they are brave enough to take it. This is more in the Magnum vein of things, *(yes,. that's who I said)* with large chunky, my parents didn't understand me riffs, gobbing over the musical fence at sustained keyboard scampers that for once make for more than just a squidgy mess on a vinyl carpet. So on the whole Lion have produced a professional, competently written album that on the odd occasion gestates the odd stunning number. Mostly though the band are working to a formula that turns out to be a tried and trusted experiment.

JOHN DUKE

TESTAMENT
'Practice What You Preach'
(WEA Advance Tape)
****

Here you have a thrash band attempting the right things and looking to the future. The young, perhaps slightly immature group that recorded 'The Legacy' has changed almost immeasurably from the developed musicians who have recorded 'Practice What You Preach'. Now we have material that is drawn out, structured, slower paced and all the heavier for it. The two main avenues of distinction are in Chuck Billy's improved vocals and the soloing of Alex Skolnick and Eric Peterson. Their efforts are a perfect enhancement to the more thoughtful, less manic songs that they adorn, and this new sound really

reminds me of, dare I say it, Metallica, with Billy's vocals coming across as Hetfield at his most doom laden. Of course we are still talking riffs riffs and more riffs, but they are superbly structured, well spaced, and the second track 'Perilous Nation' had me almost thinking about Onslaught in terms of accessibility! We are talking reachable thrash here that still carries the Testament trademark of insistent grinding rhythms, mixing inherent power with majestic creativity. Chuck's vocals have finally been allowed to roam free, unfettered by having to adhere themselves to manic thrashing rhythms, while lyrically he has broadened the bands spectrum away from black magic, evil, clanking chains, etc., to dealing with realistic, relevant subjects that stretch from the perils of the environment to child abuse to politics. The band are also casting more than a cocked hat in the direction of choruses, with 'The Time Is Coming' boasting one of the most insistent. Testament as a band have realised the implications of the third album syndrome and decided that as they develop and progress as musicians and songwriters they want to pursue a more accessible approach to thrash. Laudable sentiments and even though 'Practice What You Preach' is a strong, mature thrash album by any stretch of the imagination, I'm still not sure if it's decisive enough to break them. In fact I doubt it. I mean there are nice touches of innovation, as I said usually in the solos of both guitarists, *(on the odd occasion duelling a la Maiden at their earliest and best)* and there is the odd, unusual, off the wall riff pattern, adorning strong vocals and more structured material. But I would have liked slightly more variety, the songs tempo wise are all pretty much similar and this

lack of diversity, imagination, really manifests itself in the one track where it was needed, 'A Song Of Hope'. It's a strange anomaly but power ballads do seem the way that some thrash/crossover bands find easiest to display their many strengths and talents, and with Testament we had a very promising start, all acoustic and Spanish flurries, followed by superbly integrated and atmospheric electric melodies. Well worked, well written, never pretentious, and utilising the multifarious talents of both guitarists. Take into consideration a wicked snare sound and it had me thinking of Zeppelin, around 'Since I've Been Loving You' and its natural successor 'Tea For One'. It had that same feeling to the guitar but all too soon the riffs kick down the songs hardwon sensibilities and it's back to the orchestrated mayhem. There was a sustained lack of imagination to develop what had gone before. The following track 'Nightmare' seems to reinforce the point as its back to the thrashier end of the scale, fast and furious, slamming itself about like a couple of crack crazed sumo wrestlers, the sort of stuff that holds a bring and buy sale with your internal organs. And there's nothing wrong with that, no way, but thrash has risen to such sophisticated levels that to cut it big time a band has to show more diversity, more textures. Testament did a four star thrash album when they needed a five. Potential not fully realised. I hope it's not too late.

JOHN DUKE

HARTER ATTACK
'Human Hell'
(Metalcore CORE1)
****

The latest kings of crunch out of the States, Harter Attack should find their ride towards bigger things made easier due to the patronage of Nuclear Assault's Glenn Evans. It seems that Glenn was involved with Rich Harter's band before his days in the 'Salties and now that he's plying his trade with one of the biggest exponents of the thrash/hardcore collision he hasn't forgotten his mates. Not only does Evans produce the album, but both bands combine to produce a 'Nuclear Attack' at one point, and various members of the 'Salt may well be hiding in the grooves on various other tracks.

Stylistically similar, as you'd expect, to the 'Salties, Harter Attack sound like someone dropped a few boulders in your blender then left the thing switched on. Yup, hardcore meets thrash with the emphasis on crashin', crunchin', blastin' and stompin' with size ten boots. Not one you'd play to impress fans of Queensryche or even Metallica but sure to raise a smile from any committed mosher or diver for it's sheer, unashamed brutality alone.

It's taken a long time to get 'Human Hell' out on vinyl *(there's a cassette of Harter Attack, featuring some very different packaging, that's been kicking around this office for ages)*. Hopefully the band can get some momentum rolling now, cause the thrash market's getting clogged, mainly with acts inferior to Harter Attack. Crunchin'!!!

MARK DAY

LIZZY BORDEN
'Master Of Disguise'
(Roadrunner)
****

'Master Of Disguise' opens with violins, various explosions and you realise that we are dealing with a new Lizzy on the first solo album. And he claims it's back to his 70's roots WITH A VENGEANCE! Yeah, it frightened me too, but actually 'Master Of Disguise' is simply a logical progression from musical seeds that were spawned around the 87 album 'Visual Lies'. With 'Master Of Disguise' Lizzy has gone for a more dramatic sound, that, on occasion, with a forty piece orchestra, keyboards, etc., falters into the mellow as in melodramatic, but overall works exceedingly, surprisingly well. It's another conceptual piece rather than a concept, *(I acknowledge the difference)* but only having an advance tape, the story lyrically, which I'm told is a villain/hero scenario, is largely lost to me. Musically we are talking commercial FM radio rock, a million miles from the out and out metal of his early stuff, with everything well regulated, slightly overblown, and nicely done. 'One False Move' starts off with a very Dixie land anthem, a bit of fine old southern homage, and also prefaces the beginning of superb multi layered vocals and the first Geoff Tate/Queensryche comparisons, who, believe it or not, Lizzy ain't that far behind in the tonsil theatrics or even musical composition! Inadvertently the silly sausage actually sounds a lot better than most of the second raters who deliberately go out to ape the mighty Ryche sound. 'One False Move' and 'Phantoms' also introduce a cliched harem of sound effects that our man goes completely OTT with. Radio knob being twiddled, phone ringing, feminine moans. and groans, thunder, rain, church bells and squelchy footsteps. In this respect it's very much 'Operation Mindcrime' territory but musically what with various sub 'Tubular Bells' melodies, and riffs that have to be smacked into life it's more 'Rage For Order' but in a lighter, more rock orientated mode. Interesting that the tracks that work best are the slower numbers, among which the ballad 'Never Too Young' is a howling highlight. The odd whiff of Elton John melody wise plus great poignant vocals that show the range Lizzy has when he bothers to use it. The standout tracks on side two are again the rather deliberate 'Waiting In The Wings' and the largely acoustic 'Under The Rose' both reflecting Lizzy's maturity in vocal harmonies and song structuring. Some people might look at 'Master Of Disguise' and decide it's a case of Lizzy being desperate to get away from past failures, that consequently he has played it a bit too safe with a thought out and overtly clinical album. Yet for me he took a chance. He went for a seventies sound and feel noted at its worst for a sterile pomposity, that some aspects of rock still haven't recovered from, and to his credit 'Master Of Disguise' never ever came close to falling into such impotent traps.

JOHN DUKE

KYMERA
'Animality'
(Janus Records)
***

The cover pic gives the come-on like a proper metal album; band logo in knife-written glory and airbrushed artwork showing writhing serpent, toothy lion etc. The band themselves sport all the trappings of aviator shades, bared chests and loads of studs n' leather. But in fact Kymera turn out to have produced a fairly tasty four-track EP of Foreigner-style songs. This is beach-in-the-sun music that makes you think of beautiful, beautiful people, exposing all but a few square centimetres of their already tanned hides. Pass us another beer from the cooler, bub!

It has to be said that songs with titles like 'Born To Rock' are unlikely to stand the rock world on its head, but then that's not the purpose - this is the soundtrack of a lifestyle, car music with no loud bits to distract you from the serious business of simply cruisin'.

Kymera's contact address is in Germany, but De Niro, Morretto, Simon and the brothers Di Blasio sound like they must be Italian of origin. Not a country renowned for its heavy rock, but this album merits a few points in the easy-listening stakes.

BETTY FORD

HORSE (LONDON)
'Diesel Power'
(Wild West WWDP 001)
***

Judging by some of the reviews that this vinyl beastie's been picking up, the London Boys probably feel like they've hit the sharp end of a press backlash. After all, aren't 'Orse the band everyone loves to love? Yup, and it's 'cruel to be kind' time.

When Kensington Market barrow boys Damon Williams *(bass)*and Gary Gene *(vocals)* decided to swap flogging second hand 501's for flogging rusty AC/DC riffs alongside Marc Perez *(guitars)* and Dave Hoyland *(drums)*, things went rather well for them. So well that they've managed to get to the point of national support slots with Onslaught, various London headlining/supporting gigs and a publishing deal with Chrysalis Music before anyone noticed that Horse have no real songs to speak of.

The touring bit is understandable. On a good night, in front of the right crowd, Horse are a killer live act with enough gritty bludgeon to incite a minor riot. But how this act ever scored a publishing deal on the strength of non-songs like 'How Do You Ride?' and 'Big City Blues' has me scratching my head

* Putrid
* * Dodgy
* * * Not Bad
* * * * Brilliant
* * * * * Incredible

in disbelief. Only 'Screwed, Blued & Tattooed' or, at a push, 'Wheels In Motion', translates to vinyl.
At most this is a satisfying background racket to a party where the music isn't that important, and frankly that's disappointing. It is, as Bon Scott pointed out, a long way to the top if you want to rock 'n' roll, and Horse have taken too many shortcuts.
I seriously believe they should start demanding *"what's in it for you?"* of all the people who're *"helping out Horse"* *(an all too familiar refrain)*. Some of the *"help"* Horse have been getting they don't really need and it does them no favours in the long run.
Don't expect the world from this mini-album and you'll enjoy it for what it is, a rough blast of heavy but one-dimensional rock. Problem is, you've been lead to expect the world from Horse, haven't you?

MARK DAY

LIGHT FORCE
'Mystical Thieves'
(Pure Metal Records)
**

It appears that Australian rockers Light Force are the first speed metal band to be added to the Pure Metal roster. Okay enough research, the first track is 'Mystical Thieves' itself and it's quite awful. They desperately need another guitarist and to batter into a quaking submission a reeking Iron Maiden fixation. The guitar flailing of Murry Adams is limited to say the least and there was not a single overdub on the entire track to save his blushes! No-one should have to struggle like that and have it recorded. Yet the bass work of Steve Rowe is very Harris-like while singer Steve Johnson sounds like a substandard Di'anno which basically means that he can't really cut it and is under more strain than Chris Welch's leather strides. Not too surprisingly Light Force come over as dated, like one of the bands who you knew wouldn't survive the early hysteria of TNWOBHM. Lyric wise the songs reflect the fact that the bands are all committed Christians whose music it appears is aimed directly *"at young people searching for the true meaning of life"* which is fine as long as they ain't also searching for a half decent metal tune. The album itself is a loose conceptual piece that in a tacky and amateurish way attempts to depict the salvation of a 'rocker'. All very ambiguous and all very laudable I'm sure. The group bio, yes I did read it, calls Light Force a heavy metal/thrash band. The trouble is that the heavy metal is too ponderous and ungainly *('Crossfire')* and the thrash is too skimpy and lightweight, *('City Streets')*. Judging from the first side as a christian metal band Light Force are a long long way behind the more saccharine tones of a Barren Cross or Stryper, but the second side rather complicates matters by being considerably better. 'Children Of Sorrow' in fact is a good song, rasping metal riffs being put through various structural hoops by a resounding rhythm that gives Light Force's material a well needed kick up the cassock. 'Searching' ain't bad either, but nothing prepares for the final, longest track of the album, 'Babylon', which is rather disconcerting and totally over the top! It starts off with a stern voiced intro recounting the more bloody passages from the Bible as concerns the fate awaiting prostitutes and general adulterers. It's all fire, damnation and brimstone stuff that in its single minded autocracy is rather harrowing. The song itself ain't bad by any means, in fact one of the albums more adventurous offerings, but the fact that I mentioned that last of all hints how the band got their artistic priorities wrong. I mean the heavy, heavy diatribe at the beginning, detracts rather than enhances, hanging round the song like some lead weight. Give it another go, you might have more luck next time lads.

JOHN DUKE

FUGAZI
'Margin Walker'
(Dischord Records)
****

The one thing that bugs me about Fugazi is the small amount of material that they release. A substantial reputation has been built on only two mini albums, the first containing seven tracks, and this containing only six. For 'Martin Walker' the bio hints heavily that we are talking fully fledged album whereas the sleeve boasts the condemning initials EP. I'm sure knowing the bands strong principals and morals that the record will retail at a commensurate sum for the amount of material involved, but I'm worried about their work rate and creative output. Anyway, having got that off my chest, 'Margin Walker' shows the band still ploughing a lonely crossover path, with music that is more spaced and daring than most of their contempories, and a sound still being effortlessly dominated by hardcore maestro Ian MacKaye's sing song, almost ethnic vocals. His words seem to run round and round your senses, still containing that strong 'Oi' element that simply adds one more innate contrast to this bands almost irreverent musical movements. For me Fugazi are the prime exponents of what Washington DC inaugurated and shared with the rest of the world, a strange result of hardcore inbreeding and shared ideals. The band employ all manner of feels to their sound, reggae rhythms to blood red vocals, to strong rock/metal riffing. And its always a meeting of extremes, with aggression, sincerity, gentleness, compassion and anger standing there screaming at one another bug eyed with the frustration, or perhaps futility of it all. Scraped out anguish reflected in music that is deliberately simple, but was never simply deliberated.
The first track, 'Margin Walker' is blown out balls to the wall *(and savagely smeared there)* ravings, all heavy rock and roll and blasting riffs, carousing rhythms, iced melody, produced in sour almost PIL frame of mind, heavy as f**k leaving its size nines all over your cracked and bubbling chest. 'And The Same' shows MacKaye really utilising the feels and resonance of language itself, breathing out a sentient flow of warmth that's crucified, slashed, nailed, by the penetrating guitar of Guy Picciotto, with the rhythm section of Brendan Canty *(drums)* and Joe Lally *(bass)* a perpetual groove, wrapping everything in warm, liquid rhythms. 'Provisional' is hung around a persistent guitar refrain, a mutated U2 or a messier Cure. But it's still rock and roll, they use Marshall amps don't they? 'Promises' is the records piece de resistance. Poignant, cerebral tugging lyrics like *"Promises are shit, we speak the way we breathe.'* A superb, ranging track, covering many emotional vistas courtesy of Mackaye's enticing chanting. I hear that the first two Fugazi offerings will be released on one CD. That is an essential buy.

JOHN DUKE

JET RED
'Jet Red'
(Relativity Records)
**

Jet Red, a California-based four-piece are pictured standing beside a fighter plane as flown by Tom Cruise; a willie substitute if ever I saw one. And sure enough, 'Jet Red' is a blustering cock-rock album that always holds back enough so the boys never have to break into a sweat. I'm sure they always get the girl, but musically they lack commitment or passion. This album is made up of tired Seventies rock revisited, the result of listening to one AOR album too many. It may have something to do with the fact that their producer, Brian Foraker, was previously involved with Heart and Starship, two of the giants of this spineless genre.
I tend to find talking about who produced what for whom is generally an activity akin to trainspotting *(apologies to all snorkel parka-wearers out there)*, but in this case I think the production has a lot to do with the way this album sounds. It is as if the band have sat in the studio saying, *"we'll make this bit sound like so-and-so"*. The result is a collection of familiar fragments from rock's old timers. Humble Pie, Deep Purple and Montrose are the ones they admit to, but you can have fun spotting your own favourites. I was quite taken with the boogie-rock Aerosmith homage, 'Bad As Heaven'. Not great or original, but quite fun for a couple of plays.

BETTY FORD

HEAD EAST
'Choice Of Weapons'
(Dark Heart Records)
***

Judging by the cover logo, Head East would have liked to call themselves Knives n'Roses, if only they had the nerve. I mean a crossed switchblade and red rose is hardly a subtle reference, is it? On closer inspection they turn out not to be from L.A., but Corpus Christi in the Lone Star state, more often associated with displays of ten-gallon masculinity on bronco machines than pretty boys of glam.
Head East's choice of weapon is a light rock groove with all four band members pitching in for the swinging choruses, of which there are many. Really they are a bunch of grown men playing pop songs with a micron-thick veneer of rock laid on the surface. With their full-fat cheesy synth backing, they make Europe sound like hardcore. Kind of wimpy I know, pure hamburger in fact, but the whole thing is done with such a cheery optimism that it is hard to resist their charms. Admittedly this bounciness reaches a slightly irritating peak on 'Going Under', the kind of song that those runty Hall And Oates specialise in.
'Choice Of Weapons' is hardly a rock record, but after a few snakebite and blacks, you'll find it hard to resist shaking your bits on the dancefloor.

BETTY FORD

SWEET SIN
'Sweet Sin'
(M.O.B. Records)
*

Manchester; a city currently attracting plenty of attention for its drug-bustin' indie bands, hyped by the double-breasted and silver-

tongued Tony Wilson, who cunningly netted a TV slot to plug his own bands under the guise of 'arts programming'. Manchester; capital of the industrial north and natural home of that old warhorse of ten years ago, NWOBHM. Manchester; stamping ground of rockers Sweet Sin, who are desperately trying to kick some life into the long-dead corpse of said horse. Absolutely no chance, you're living in the past, boys.
This self-title album is an item of intense dullness that bored the arse off this reviewer. Now there is something to be said for music that is unaffected by trends and fads. Not every band need go under the tattooists' needle and swig Jack from the bottle or don generously cut shorts and leap from speaker stacks, but Sweet Sin sound as if they could use a new influence or two. Instead they have chosen to record this soggy pie-supper of a record; pure HM stodge. Sweet Sin have fallen into the same bad habits as bands like Saxon, who were always so lacking style; slobs in tight drawers. No humour, no fun, no anger, no aggression, just a muddy mix of heavy riffs and yelping. A record sadly lacking in anything of interest.

BETTY FORD

RORY GALLAGHER
'Tattoo/Blueprint'
(Capo Records TFOLP021)
****

My my, two records for the price of one and both from the guru of blues. Now we're talkin' rock n'roll - forget all those skinny imitators decked out in scarves, cuban heels and diamante.
Gallagher's tunes are not for the breed who wear Triumph T shirts but couldn't tell a carburettor from a piston, nosiree, he plays the genuine article for the genuine tribes. And this he proved very well at this year's Kent Custom Bike Show where he turned up as the headlining surprise guest. His music holds just the right level of energy, never slow enough to die, but never too fast not to savour. A minimum of fuss leaves the groove's bare bones out in the open, listen to the honky tonk strains of 'Who's That Coming' if you doubt one word. The slide and the vibe ooze from the fretboard like no one's gonna clean it up. 'Tattoo'd Lady' and '20:20 Vision' weigh more but stay as dirty and the keyboards from Lou Martin might scorch you before the album runs out. 'Admit It' rocks and grinds, salvation in blues axe disguise and a neat way to wind up record number one.
'Blueprint' was the first studio vinyl cut to be delivered from the second Gallagher band, the same line up also featured on 'Tattoo' with Gallagher, Martin, bassist Gerry McAvoy and Rod De'ath on drums and percussion. The production on 'Tattoo' is noticeably more relaxed, but the grit gets under your nails with 'Blueprint' which kicks off with 'Walk On Hot Coals' before the more folk orientated 'Daughter Of The Everglades'. The cover of Big Bill Broonzy's 'Banker's Blues' twists way way down, harmonica and acoustics jostling in fine form.
It's easy to see why Rory Gallagher is still popular with those who pay no heed to fashions, but rely instead on a solid and trusty diet of soulful songs. This is where the spirit of rock n'roll really lives, deep in the hearts of the ones who, like Gallagher, know how to share it. He hasn't lost the knack, and if you've never stumbled across him before, this double album bargain package is probably a good way to do so. So if you're more prone to the genuine article and short cuts amount to cheap imitations for you *and* you can actually kickstart that Bonneville rather than getting your mother to sew a patch onto the back of your jacket, swingalonga Rory. Boogie never came so good.

LIZEVANS

PHILIP BOA & THE VOODOO CLUB
'Hair'
(Polydor 837 852-1)
****

Despite the fact that I loathe to use the term 'Metal Hammer material', *(because just what that's supposed to mean I will never quite know)* I do have to admit that this is really not very metal. However, due to the apparent shortage of albums in the office, I'm going to review it anyway. So there. And if any of you out there feel like giving something different a quick spin, perhaps you'll find yourselves being catered for.
Philip Boa is, I believe, German. He plays guitar and shares vocals with a bleached blonde by the name of Pia. Occasionally the Voodoo Club come across like The Sugarcubes, a maelstrom of chaos and confusion, anarchic rock with quirky hard riffing and manic percussion. 'Primitive Man' sets a difficult pace and reverberates with all the orchestrated splendours of Boa and Club while 'Tragic Mastery Of Stockhausen' swerves between resonating tribal beats and choral crescendos. 'Morlocks In England' sets another dizzy riff on its feet and once out it careers blindly in and behind some alarming shrieks and unsettling rhythms. Eastern atmospheres emerge from 'They Say Hurray' and oh god here's the connection - 'Albert Is A Headbanger'! Heavy Metal guitar collides with observations such as '...he stops talking...'?? Still the power and the crunch would sit quite comfortably in the middle of a Prong album.
Produced by Tony Visconti who was behind many a Thin Lizzy album, 'Hair' reeks of intense anxieties and musical disturbances. And it's not a metal album at all as I've already said. However, I like it, although I'd need to be in the right mood to play it. So it gets four stars. And if you're a fairly open minded sort of chap or chappess, willing to sample a bit of alternative indulgence, check out Mr. Boa and his Voodoo Club. Just don't expect to hear the sound of American distilleries, the clack of toe caps or the roar of a Harley engine. This is more the cup of tea and a slice of civilised, disorderly angst variety of music which may or not be for your pleasure.

LIZ EVANS

MALICE
'Crazy In The Night'
(Mini LP Roadrunner)
***

This is a four track coda dedicated to the memory of Malice who released two albums in a short but heavily hyped career. Malice never made it because they couldn't work out what they wanted to be, thrash, metal or LA rockers, so they tried it all and succeeded only in being an aural pastiche of everyone from AC/DC to Metallica. Image wise too our likely lads had problems, mix 'n' matching glam and thrash, make-up and leather and chains and large woman in an unbecoming formation. Hyped to their feathered gills and by the by employing the production talents of one Michael Wagener, he of Dokken and White Lion fame, who must have had the screaming adabs when he was confronted by such a mish mash of styles and ideals. 'Crazy In The Night' shows the direction the band would have headed in if they hadn't derailed. Yet I still believe Malice met their demise taking a reasonable chance, making an educated assumption, either consciously or not, and failing. And what was that assumption? That there should be some middle ground between the more accessible, commercial end of speed metal and LA glam, sleaze. Why they should have bothered to try and find it is debatable, but the fact that it should have been a half viable project is not. Yet Malice proved that it's bloody hard to do and the audience even harder to find, as may Celtic Frost in the coming years. I mean the material on this EP is okay, but still I feel would have slipped between the two aforementioned musical camps without gaining the full approbation of either. Malice had the riffs, melodies and technical ability as much as any other band but they simply couldn't decide where to focus it all. Best track is the Ratt/Dokken 'Vica Versa' which hints that in many ways Malice *(RIP)* were indeed a good band gone begging.

JOHN DUKE

REALM
'Endless War'
(Roadrunner R0 95091)
****

Realm are leaders of avant garde HM and speed thrash. They play stuff that falls between Laaz Rockit and Nasty Savage and come out sounding like Queensryche, believe it or not!
The line up includes Takis Kinis and Paul Laganowski *(guitars)*, Steve Post *(bass)*, Mark Antoni *(vocals)* and Mike Olson *(drums)*. Ma[illegible]s vocals are of a high standard and his songs are fast but controlled and never messy. Variety is the keyword. The cover shows a horse looking mysterious, so you can guess the lyrics are pretty heavy duty stuff. Side one opens with 'Endless War' and grabs your attention. Side two has an adventurous version of The Beatles' 'Eleanor Rigby' and replaces the original tenderness with no nonsense energy. An outstanding vocal performance.
Another song to check out is 'All Heads With Turn To The Hunt' a bit of a concept classic. The LP needs more memorable songs but is enhanced by crisp production from Jim Bartz. Nice to see a band willing to take risks and not compromise their style. After all that policy didn't do Metallica any harm.

HORACE 'WILDBEESTE' SMITH

TITAN FORCE
'Titan Force'
(US Metal Records)
**

Titan Force is a muscle-bound German heavy rock outfit who have offered u a mixture of beefed up AOR and acid-washed populist metal. Personally I find this kind of puffed-up, self-important rock pretty hard to stomach. It isn't out and out crap, but it is so bland and featureless that I can barely summon up the energy to hate it. Far too much emphasis has been put on getting everything sounding authentic, all Deep Purple riffs and falsetto squeals, but with no gut feeling that could make you feel that these guys were trying to make anything other than money. To coin a phrase, this is disco metal which uses every trick of surface glitter to hide a lack of substance. Every song starts differently so you can tell them apart - acoustic solo, slow bit, keyboard twiddles - you know all about these things I'm sure. After that though, it is straight into the medium-paced Survivor routine with chunky guitars and a singer who pouts and poses from a deep and moody growl up into the buttock-clenching range of the HM soprano.
Somebody obviously thought this lot were worth spending oodles of recording time on, but I would have to seriously question their judgement. High on production values but very short on real feeling; as your attorney I recommend you give this a decisive body swerve.

Eddie Gibb

SINGLES

Reviewed By ICE AGE and THE ALMIGHTY

Swedish drummer Tina Stromberg and new American vocalist Debbie Gunn of female thrash combo Ice Age teamed up with Ricky Warwick *(vocals/guitar)* and Stump *(drums)* from Polydor's new signings The Almighty to form the singles committee. By a unanimous verdict the 'single of the week' was...

NUCLEAR ASSAULT 'Good Times, Bad Times' (Under One Flag)

Ricky: *"Good cover version of a good song. The vocals were too far back in the mix cause he sounds like he's got a good voice, I like people to sing like that.*
Debbie: *"I really like Nuclear Assault a lot, this is a pretty good cover tune."*
Stump: *"It was interesting."*
Tina: *"Good rhythm, good song."*
And now the Nuclear Assault B-sides *(Hang The Pope/ Lesbians/ My America/ Happy Days)...*
Ricky: *"Makes Napalm Death sound like Abba. I like it, takes me back a couple of years to when I was a punk rocker."*
Debbie: *"Too bad they didn't make a video to go along with the E.P.. To see 'em live is as good as hearing them live."*
Stump: *"Liked them all apart from 'Hang The Pope', liked the title, didn't like the track."*
Tina: *"A bit too thrashy for me, but I liked 'Happy Days'."*

LEATHERWOLF 'Hideaway' (Island)

Ricky: *"The record matches the cover. The cover's not that good and the record did nothing for me."*
Tina: *"Throw it out the window. It was a good production but I'm not really into that kind of music."*
Stump: *"I'm a bit biased, because I've met them before and they're a bunch of pricks. Don't like them at all. I was going to be diplomatic, but you played me Leatherwolf."*
Debbie: *"To me it's another f***in' Bon Jovi, you've heard one and they're all the same."*

BLACK SABBATH 'Devil & Daughter' (Island)

Tina: *"Nothing special."*
Stump: *"To me it's very dated, and notice on the cover that Cozy Powell's got credits on it, how can he have credits for writing when he can't play?"*
Debbie: *"Certainly not the old Sabbath I knew. I don't know what to think about it."*
Ricky: *"What have they done? They should have chucked it years ago. Didn't groove me."*

ACID REIGN 'Humanoia' E.P. (Under One Flag)

Ricky: *"I liked it till the vocals came in. I also didn't like the chorus or the hooks. You played it to me too quiet as well, that stuff needs to be blaring. I've seen them live and I remember enjoying them. That's the sort of stuff I can get into."*

BLUE BLUDD 'Running Back' (Music For Nations)

Ricky: *"Bland, boring rock 'n' roll. I f***ing hate it! A waste of vinyl, money, time and effort."*
Stump: *"...And hairspray, you missed out hairspray! Liked the guitar riff, didn't like the keyboards. A bit gay, too many curly perms."*
Debbie: *"A heavier version of Europe, the same f***ing boring love song."*
Tina: *"Don't even want to waste my voice on this band."*

Debbie: *"It was O.K., it didn't do anything for me. It was too weak I thought. The live tracks on the B-side sound much better, I'd like to see their guys."*
Stump: *"Not my cup of tea, more Ricky's than mine. Production was terrible, drum sound was terrible. If the production had been better it would have been alright. I liked the live stuff better."*
Tina: *"I liked it, I like the guitars. But I didn't like the vocals. If you want a headbanging muscle in your neck this is definitely a song to practice with."*

MORDRED 'Every Day's A Holiday' (Noise)

Ricky: *"Had a good groove, I quite liked it. Liked the riffs, but again you didn't play it to me loud enough."*
Debbie: *"I really like Mordred a lot, another good band to come out of the Bay Area."*
Stump: *"I liked it as well. I liked the bass runs, quite good."*
Tina: *"I didn't like it at all, dry, boring song."*

Charts

7th AUGUST '89

METAL HAMMER UK READERS CHARTS SINGLES

1. **THE CULT** Edie (Ciao Baby)
2. **GUNS N'ROSES** Patience
3. **TIGERTAILZ** Love Bomb Baby
4. **BLACK SABBATH** Devil And Daughter
5. **ANDERSON BRUFORD HOWE & WAKEMAN** Brother Of Mine
6. **ACID REIGN** Humanoia
7. **RICHARD MARX** Satisfied
8. **GUN** Better Days
9. **DARE** Abandon (Remix)
10. **W.A.S.P.** The Real Me
11. **VIXEN** Love Made Me
12. **BON JOVI** Lay Your Hands On Me
13. **FM** Bad Luck
14. **ONSLAUGHT** Let There Be Rock
15. **METALLICA** One
16. **GUNS N'ROSES** Sweet Child O'Mine (Remix)
17. **QUEENSRŸCHE** Eyes Of A Stranger
18. **BON JOVI** I'll Be There For You
19. **JOHN DUKE & CHUBBY** Late Night Drinkies
20. **NUCLEAR ASSAULT** Good Times, Bad Times

METAL HAMMER UK HEAVY METAL ALBUMS CHART

1. **GUNS N'ROSES** Appetite For Destruction
2. **THE CULT** Sonic Temple
3. **GUNS N'ROSES** Lies
4. **BADLANDS** Badlands
5. **WHITE LION** The Big Game
6. **W.A.S.P.** The Headless Children
7. **KINGS X** Gretchen Goes To Nebraska
8. **SLAMMER** The Work Of Idle Hands
9. **WOLFSBANE** Live Fast, Die Fast
10. **MR. BIG** Mr. Big
11. **METALLICA** ...And Justice For All
12. **VIXEN** Vixen
13. **OBITUARY** Slowly We Rot
14. **SABBAT** Dreamweaver
15. **GUN** Taking On The World
16. **BLUE MURDER** Blue Murder
17. **BLACK SABBATH** Headless Cross
18. **SARAYA** Saraya
19. **KINGDOM COME** In Your Face
20. **ANNIHILATOR** Alice In Hell

Chart courtesy of SHADES, world famous HM record store.
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To contribute to the METAL HAMMER Reader's Charts:

Just fill in the coupon below with your favourite Top Ten singles/albums and send it to:

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ON TOUR

WOLFSBANE
August -
7 Birmingham, Irish Centre
8 Middlesborough, Town Hall
10 Aberdeen, Ritzys
11 Edinburgh, The Venue
13 Glasgow, Rooftops
15 Belfast, Rosetta
16 Dublin, Baggot Inn
18 London, Marquee

SARAYA
August-
9 - Birmingham, The Irish Centre
11 - Newcastle, Mayfair
12 - Manchester, International II
14 - Bradford, Queens Hall
15 - Nottingham, Rock City
16 - London, Marquee *(headlining)*
17 - London, Astoria

TORINO
The new Torino line-up is launched *(incorporating singer Tony O'Hara)* with the announcement of their first UK headline tour.
Dates are:
August-
7 - Swansea, Cinderella's
11 - Morecambe, Gardens
12 - Chester, Manweb Hall
13 - Keighley, Festival
16 - London, Hippodrome
17 - Telford, Pisces
18 - Reading, After Dark Club
19 - Crawley, New Inn
20 - Llanharran, RFC
22 - Brighton, Electric Ocean Club
23 - Rayleigh, Pink Toothbrush
24 - Sheffield, Take Two
25 - Sunderland, Kasbah
26 - Newcastle, 244 Rock Club
30 - Oswestry, Empire

ROMEO'S DAUGHTER
Following the announcement that the rail and tube strikes will still persist on Wednesdays, ROMEO'S DAUGHTER have moved their Marquee date to August 10. Another alteration in their UK tour dates is Nottingham Rock City. The band will now play this venue on August 12.
August-
10 - London, Marquee
12 - Nottingham, Rock City

THE ATOM SEED
August-
11 - Deptford Crypt
15 - Gossips, Dean Street
September-
8 - London, Astoria

TEXAS
TEXAS will be appearing as Special Guests at the Simple Minds stadium shows this August. The dates are as follows:
August-
5 - Cardiff, Arms Park
12 - Edinburgh, Meadowbank
26 - London, Wembley Stadium

THE SONS OF VALENTINO
August-
12 - Covent Garden, Rockgarden
17 - Soho, Borderline
23 - Fulham, Greyhound
29 - Oxford, Dolly
September-
4 - London, Marquee
7 - Kentish Town, Bull & Gate
18 - London, Marquee
23 - Croydon, Cartoon
30 - Oxford, The Jerico Tavern

FM
August-
9 Birmingham, Irish Centre
10 Buckly Tivoli Centre, Clywd
11 Newcastle, Mayfair
12 Manchester, International
14 Bradford, Queens Hall
15 Nottingham, Rock City
17 Astoria Theatre, London
All ticket prices £5.00 except Astoria £6.00 and Nottingham £4.50

THE WHO
October -
6 Birmingham, NEC
7 Birmingham, NEC
23 Wembley Arena
24 Wembley Arena

ROCK FOR HILLSBOROUGH
September -
2 Telford Arena

TRAPPAZAT, JAX, LARRIKIN BAJJON, MARSHALL LAW, THE GRIP, LAST OF THE TEENAGE IDOLS
August -
8 Bolton, Central Park
9 Leeds, Duchess Of York
11 Oldham, Hurricane Club
18 Morecambe, The Gardens
19 Hull, Adelphi
21 Preston, Easy Street
22 Newcastle, Riverside
23 Doncaster, Ritzy
24 Middlesborough, Chaplains
25 Workington, Karnegy Theatre
September -
2 London, Marquee

BON JOVI/EUROPE/SKIDROW/ VIXEN
August -
19 Milton Keynes Bowl
Tickets are priced £16.50

ICE AGE
August -
8 Wisbech, Queens Hall
9 London, Hippodrome
10 Bradford, Frog & Toad
11 Stoke, Wheatsheaf
12 Milton Keynes, Woughton Centre
13 East Dereham, Memorial Hall
18 Walthamstow, Royal Standard
23 Leeds, Duchess
28 Nottingham, Rock City
31 Bristol, Bierkeller
September -
2 London, Opera On The Green

AEROSMITH
November -
11 Belfast, Antrim Forum
12 Dublin, The Point
15 London, Hammersmith Odeon
17 London, Wembley Arena
18 Birmingham, NEC
Tickets for Wembley are £10.00 and £9.00

JETHRO TULL
September -
18 Inverness Eden Court Theatre
20 Newcastle City Hall
21 Edinburgh Playhouse
23 Manchester Apollo
25 Birmingham NEC
27 London Hammersmith Odeon
Ticket prices are £9.50 and £8.50 everywhere except London where they are £10.50 and £9.50

TRIXX FEDERATION
August -
11 Newcastle 244 Club
13 Burnly M.C.Rockclub
17 Redcar Sandpiper
September -
22 Cardiff Bogeys
23 Oxford New Inn
24 Bristol Fleece 'N' Firkin

VANDAMNE
August -
7 Retford Newcastle Arms
9 Coalville Railway
17 Ashington Bubbles
18 Sunderland Kasbah
19 Newcastle 244 Rock Club
26 Witney Crawly New Inn

DUMPY'S RUSTY NUTS
August -
5 Mildenhall, Speedway Rock And Blues Festival

MACC LADS
August -
11 Widnes Queen's Hall

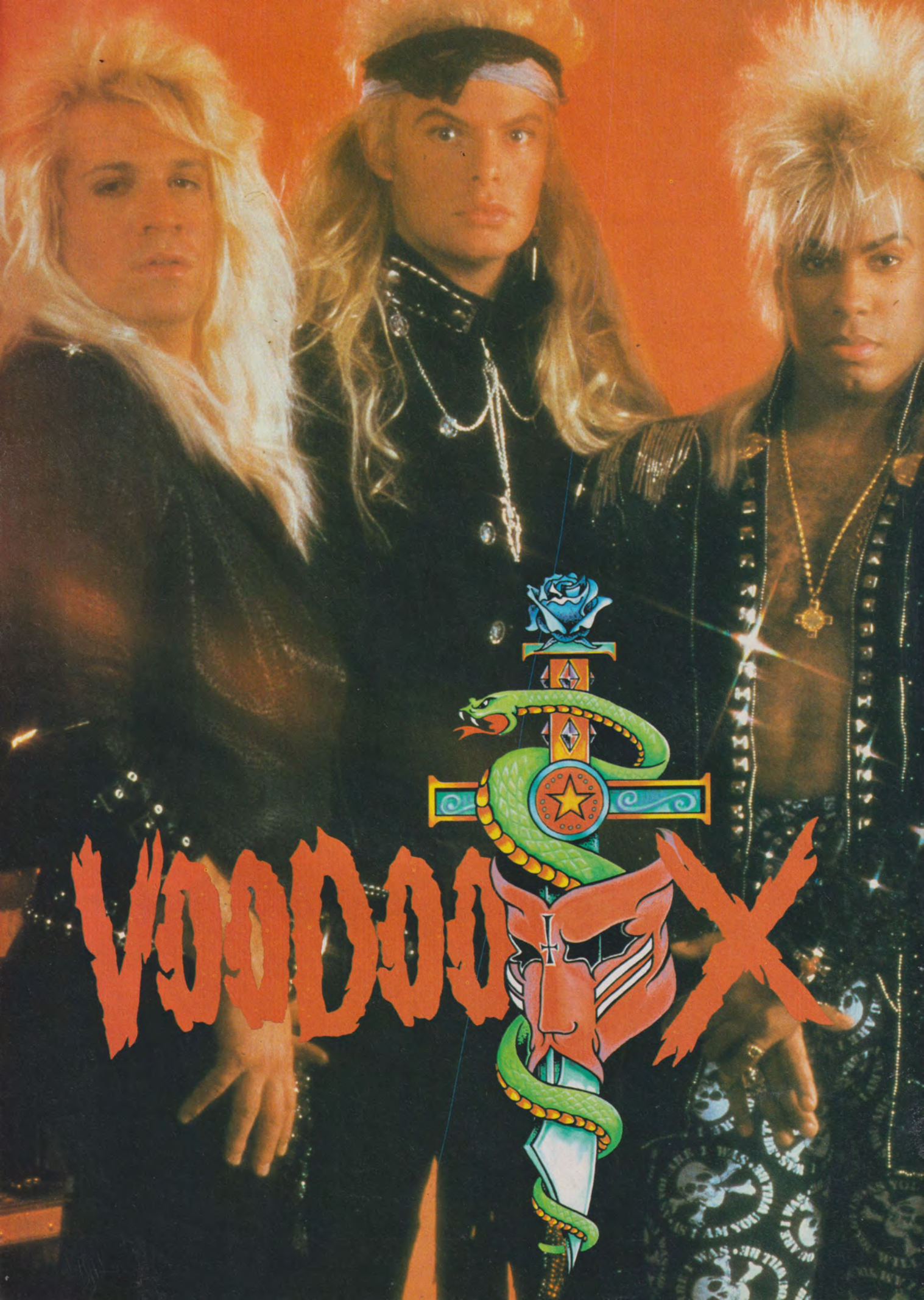
MARILLION
December -
3 Newcastle City Hall
4 Glasgow Barrowlands
6 Bristol Colston Hall
7 Gwent Newport Centre
9 Hanley Victoria Hall
10 Bradford St George's Hall
11 Sheffield City Hall
13 Liverpool Royal Court
14 Manchester Apollo
15 Wolverhampton Civic
17 Birmingham Aston Villa Leisure Centre
18 Hammersmith Odeon
Tickets are priced at £11.00 and £10.00, except for Glasgow *(£9.00 only)* and Gwent, Hanley, Wolverhampton and Birmingham *(£10.00 only)*.

BLACK SABBATH
September -
1 Liverpool Royal Court
2 Sheffield City Hall
3 Newcastle City Hall
5 Edinburgh Playhouse
6 Manchester Apollo
7 Leicester De Montfort Hall
9 London Hammersmith Odeon
10 London Hammersmith Odeon
11 Bristol Colson Hall
Tickets are priced at £8.00 and £9.00, except for London and Bristol *(£8.50 and £9.50)*.

MOTORHEAD
December - 14 Newcastle City Hall
Ticket price: £6.00 and £7.00
17 Birmingham Hummingbird
Ticket price: £7.00 in advance
19/20 London Hammersmith Odeon
Ticket price: £6.00, £7.00 and £8.00

MOURNBLADE
August -
7 Bristol Bierkeller
10 Chelmsford Y Club
11 Litchfield Arts Centre

JUNIOR MANSON SLAGS support: CREAMIN JESUS
August -
12 Reading, After Dark Club
31 Harrow/Kenton Road, The Plough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VIDEO REVIEWS

L.A. GUNS
'One More Reason'
(Channel Five Video)

A mess of dirty black hair and greasy black leathers, that's L.A. Guns for ya. Poor cousins to You Know Who 'N' Roses, the L.A. Gunners didn't make too much of a splash with their debut Phonogram album in the U.K. but obviously must have made enough of a dent in the U.S. to warrant a bundle of videos, collected in one easy package for you here by Channel 5.
The classic 'One More Reason' kicks this video collection off in scorching style. In keeping with the black 'n' white tones of L.A. Guns' music, the video's washed out colours convey the hot 'n' parched song 'n' setting perfectly. There's visual violence and a lurking sense of even nastier goings on just underneath the surface, 'n' sweaty cleavage 'n' trashed guitars. In fact there's a lot of guitar trashing in this video.
Performance video meets trashy tabloid expose on the rumpy pumpy filled 'Sex Action', the next track up, but the first vid I'd never set eyes on before takes the band out to the desert for 'Electric Gypsy', all Harley D's and another Tracii Guns guitar smashing extravaganza. Hot stuff indeed.
There's a real gritty, garage feel to all the music here, which I'm not sure the band were really looking for, but the grungy production works in a strange sort of way. It distanced them from the more polished Mick Clink G'N'R sound when most bands are desperate to dilute their own identities and hitch their wagons to Axl's freight train.
Anyway, there's another bundle of stuff as well, nothing as effective as 'One More Reason', but still tuff 'n' scuffed raunch rock. Only dodgy moment is Tracii Guns being interviewed in a guitar store that's well Spinal Tap-ish, especially considering his preference for smashing the buggers.
Buy this baby and keep an eye out for the new album when it emerges! Wicked!

MARK DAY

PROTECT THE INNOCENT
'Various Artists'
(Telstar Video)

Like the recent album of the same name, this is rather a mixed bag, and I really can't see the point of a collection of visuals this diverse. While the album probably makes nice background noises, I'm sure the cassette must be superb in-car entertainment and the CD is a good way of getting a nice bundle of different acts if you can't really afford to invest in CDs of every album that comes out, but a video? Would you really want to sit on the sofa over and over again watching it? I doubt it.
Cinderella's Mexican Border excursion, 'Gypsy Road' is the best on offer, along with the flamboyant 'Love Bomb Baby' by the Tint Totz *(that's TigerTailz to you mate)*. Meanwhile Wrathchild's low budget 'Nuclear Rokket' shows video director Bruce Dickinson *(yes, that Bruce Dickinson)* prancing about dressed like a close relative of Hilda from Coronation Street. Freudian or what? There's one of the Dogs D'Amour's great near-hits 'I Don't Want You To Go', Zodiac's 'Backseat Education' *(surely you've seen it by now?)* and some thrash from Exodus and Nuclear Assault.
However, is that any excuse for old crumblies Saxon creaking through 'Back On The Streets' *(time was to prove that they weren't!)*, or mediocre A.O.R. duffers Shout and the ludicrous Mammoth 'Fatman' vid *(a great band, but best listened to with eyes shut)*.
You might feel so starved of decent rock visuals that you'll be tempted to try this one. Forget it, the increasingly tasty 'Hard 'N' Heavy' vids are more worthy of your attention.

MARK DAY

ANDERSON, BRUFORD, WAKEMAN,HOWE
'Brother Of Mine'
(Arista)

Here's an elaborate promo video that you may catch on TV which celebrates the return of a group of fine musicians who created some of the best rock in the late Sixties and early Seventies under the banner of Yes. There have been strange goings on the Yes camp that even their greatest fans find disturbing. On paper it seems fine to bring back old friends from the cold, like Steve Howe, who had a miserable time with GTR, like Rick, who has spent time on the fringes of New Music, and Bill who had been working with Patrick Moraz among his many diverse activities. But it seems daft to set up in opposition to the official Yes headed by Chris Squire, just when that band had managed to break down hostility to the ways of the Seventies, by convincingly updating their sound with 'Big Generator'. This sounds - and looks - decidedly dated, although the special effects created by Storm Thorgersen and Roger on 'The Big Dream', 'Nothing Can Come Between Us', and 'Long Lost Brother Of Mine'are impressive and attractive. If Jon wanted to recreate past glories of the old Yes, then I think they should have gone back to the days of 'Time And A Word'or 'Yes' when the songs were shorter, tighter and the point. But what the hell - its good to see them back!

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BRIGHTON: Centre
CAMBRIDGE: Millers Music Centre
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DERBY: Way Ahead
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THE MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF THE GUITAR STRING

Guitar and bass strings are the very first step in the musical chain from the musician to the audience. Much ignored by younger or inexperienced musos, the humble string is treated with a great deal more respect by the experienced. Yet they too have built up a wealth of myths, legends and downright rubbish about the subject! So, in an effort to straighten the string legends and bring in a touch of reality - below is a brief guide to strings, their construction, manufacture, design and operations...and playability!

Strings for musical instruments have undergone radical changes over the years. Starting way back in the 16th century the principle material used for their making was cat gut. Some people think this is actually a joke, but in reality, well made catgut strings were the stuff of Paganini and the great masters of the classical era. The introduction of steel wire *(it is said, from the iron foundry and sword makers in Toledo, Italy)* changed that, and moggies everywhere breathed a collective sigh of relief...

To enable the strings to reach correct tension, and stay there, takes a special type of alloy, a blend of metals that can withstand the extremes of pressure, for long periods of time. Obviously, the manufacturers like to keep their personal formulas to themselves, but the principal ingredients are steel, bronze, copper, or silver.

Guitar string technology is based on two main principles. The string should be taut enough to reach the correct pitch, and elastic enough to allow for some bending *(either by finger or tremolo arm)* and then return to pitch again. This sounds like an enigma but the makers have to run a fine line between the two to create a string that is playable in the modern styles. Generally speaking, guitar strings are single filaments *(one strand only)* for the top E, B and G, while the lower three *(D, A and low E)* are wound. This means that they have an inner core, which is then covered by a very fine wire along the entire length, closely packed together. Bass guitar strings are all wound, a necessity due to the heavy strain on those cables! These types of strings are designed for electric guitars, or acoustic guitars that are designed to take them. Never put steel strings on an acoustic guitar that is designed for nylon strings *(ie: classical or spanish guitars)* since the strain induced by them will tear the instrument into small bits pretty damn fast. Similarly, nylon strings *(which have no metal content)* won't be picked up by an electric guitar pickup. I know this sounds obvious, but I've seen too many nice little classical boxes turned into so much matchwood by careless and ignorant owners...

WIREY BEASTS

Strings come in a bewildering array of sizes, shapes and styles. Confronted with the usual music shop rack of pretty pack designs, most guitarists simply look for a name they know, and buy into that, regardless of what is in the packet! So, lets go through the technical terms relating to the wiry little beasts. Gauge is the term used for the thickness of the strings, and is expressed in divisions of an inch. Typical electric guitar strings run from 009 to 042 gauge. But there are tremendous variations on this, ranging from very light strings - typically 007 to around 038, to very heavy ones, such as 014 - 056. The simple equation is, the heavier the string, the more 'pull' it has, and the stiffer it is to bend. Very heavy strings are usually only used for rhythm guitar work, for the extra volume they create, pushing out driving chords. The benefit of heavy strings is that they don't deviate from pitch due to the pressure of the fingers on the frets: which means that barre chords are delivered with six strings in perfect tune. *(We're talking ideal worlds here!)*. Narrower or lighter gauge strings are more volatile, and can be pushed or bent to reach higher notes than the fret played. A similar strain is placed on all six strings when the tremolo arm is in use, and recent inventions in the tremolo stakes have meant steadily more powerful trem systems such as the Kahler, Floyd Rose and Ibanez designs. When these were first introduced, it was found that they could literally pull the machine heads round when the trem was used! so, the nut lock was born which is a clamp placed behind or instead of the nut on the neck, and the string is then isolated from the tuning heads. The string is then fine tuned by the use of micro adjusters on the tremolo itself). It was also discovered that the ends of the strings in the tremolo system were prone to breakages due to the massive strain at the trem end. So, Steinberger, Rotosound, Ernie Ball, Picato and a host of others came up with reinforced string ends, with heavy windings at the most pressurised end of the string.

GLITTERING

Recently, a German company called Maxima managed to finally create a gold string. Previously, there had been chrome or brass finishes available *(as well as black - strings get dirty!)* but gold had eluded them, since it is hard to get this precious metal to adhere to any other metal. How they managed it I don't know: but the results areastounding. The strings are not only a glittering gilt finish, but they also last longer than other types, due in part to their exceptional quality, and the fact that they retain their density and cleanliness much better than conventional designs.

In choosing a string that suits you, bear in mind that the stars themselves tend to find a brand and gauge size they like, and stick with it for years. Find out the gauge of string that the guitar was supplied with, *(a music shop will help here)* and decide if they are too heavy or light and buy in another set a notch in either direction. I often get asked how long you can leave a set of strings on a guitar, and the answer to this is quite complex, depending very much on how heavily you play, how much you sweat, and how embarrassing a broken string is on stage! For rehearsal uses, I would give a string around 20 - 30 playing hours. for stage use, the criteria changes - for you really can't go out with a set of manly old wires hanging off your axe and expect them to stay the course. Everyone plays heavier on stage than in rehearsals *(thanks to the adrenalin rush of being on stage)*, so the best bet is to change the strings just before the last rehearsal before a concert. This gives the strings time to settle down *(or play-in as some call it)*, and should ensure that they will stay the course... If you do happen to break a string on stage, the situation is a headache! If you use a tremolo system and locking nut, the operation to change a string can take several fumbling minutes backstage while the crowd get restless and the lead singer ends up cracking jokes. best bet is to have a second guitar handy, even a cheapo one, so that you can switch to that and leave the scrabble to get the hex nuts off to some hapless roadie.

TROUBLE SHOOTER

If you suffer from a lot of string breakages there are troubleshooting operations that can help. Start off by carefully checking where the strings are breaking. If this is at the bridge end of things *(or tremolo)* then you may have to change to a set with reinforced ends. It may also pay to go a gauge heavier too - just to see if the extremes of bending aren't snapping lesser strings. It could also be that there is a sharp edge on the blade which the string passes over. If this is the case, don't try and file it down! This will only leave lots of tiny iron filing all over the guitar *(which gather on the tops of the magnetic pickup)* which will then get onto all the blades and will probably snap the rest of the strings too. Instead, wrap blue tack all around the blade *(removed from the guitar and carefully file the edges of the slot down. This is a tricky and delicate move to make: so if you aren't sure, go find someone who is.*

Bass strings are not subject to the same strains as guitar strings (in terms of the average player - Bob Daisley isn't average at all, he pushes his strings well hard!) and don't tend to break with the same regularity as their skinnier colleagues. But they do have a mystique all of their own: one player I know lightly oils his strings before he takes the stage - to reduce friction, and keep moisture out of the windings. This does seem to work, though how it affects the tonality is something to be investigated. the main aim of the bass player is to keep the strings in perfect tuning at all times. so a stable set of strings is vital. bass strings take a mite longer to play in that guitar strings: so don't slap a new set on ten minutes before the gig and expect them to stay in tune for long! Bass strings also last a lot longer than the guitar version; you can get away with 40 - 50 hours rehearsal, and maybe a couple of gigs before they start to deteriorate and sound toneless and flat. In general, bass strings are 'roundwound': though there is a species known as flatwound or tapewound. These have a tape of metal wrapped around the core, instead of the usual filament profile wires generally in use. I hate tapewound strings! They just don't seem to have the same cut and drive as the roundwounds, and they soon look tarnished and grubby after a few hours. Similarly, someone invented bass strings wrapped in plastic many years ago: dreadful things that would slip all over the place. Avoid them if you can.

OVERVIEW

This being a very brief guide to strings and their uses, we haven't the space to list all the makers and the possible variations in design and technology: but we can take a brief overview of the markets at the present. Rotosound/Superwound, Albion, and Picato are three very popular makes, manufactured in the U.K. Their U.S. counterparts are Ernie Ball, Dean Markley and La Bella. From Europe come Maxima *(and a host of weird Italian and German makers who principally create piano strings, but who also make guitar and bass strings as a sideline)*. These, and many others, will be on display at the British Music Fair, where the competition for the U.K. string markets has been fierce, and getting fiercer! Fancy new additions like 'double wound' and strange new terms like 'trem active' are being banded about.

Which brings me to the cheapo cheapo department. Strings cost from three to six pounds for a guitar, and from eight to twelve pounds for a bass. *(Maxima are an expensive exception here, coming in at about 20 per cent more, but the makers claim they last more than 20 per cent longer, so there.)* If you can't afford to buy a full set, then change only the top 3 strings *(single filament)* and hope for the best on the rest. You can *(at an extreme pinch)* boil the dirt out of old strings: which works quite well on bass strings, but not particularly on guitar. the form is simply remove the strings, coil them up, and drop them into boiling water for around a minute. This should get quite a lot of the dirt from out of the windings *(you can help by adding vinegar to the water, if you can stand the smell.*

In terms of general care, you should wipe down chrome strings gently after each concert or rehearsal, and leave them clean and dry. a lint free cloth should be used for this, to avoid leaving the strings clogged with fibres after wiping. If a string it notched, or if the outer windings are damaged, then the string is at the end of it's life and should be replaced immediately.

As I said at the start of this feature; the strings are the first step in the chain from you to your audience. Like the vocalists microphone, they are the stage 1 of your act. Don't forget, strings are disposable! Don't keep on with an ancient set of grime encrusted wires. Your playing and sound will suffer badly for it, and in the end, this will obviously affect your reputation as a player. But don't fret!

TIM OAKES

BACK ISSUES

SUFFERING? HELP IS AT HAND

Missed a particular edition of METAL HAMMER you really wanted to see? You know, that one with the great pictures of Cinderella or the fabbo interviews with Anthrax, Metallica or Yngwie Malmsteen? Help is at hand. You can now order Back Issues of MH from detailed list below, dating back to 1986. Just tell us which issue you'd like and send a cheque or postal order payable to "Rockteam" for £2 each copy including p&p to "Back Issues" Metal Hammer, 59 Queens Gardens, Bayswater, London W2 3HF.

Metal Attack 87

Gary Moore (cover), 16 page AC/DC special, Kreator, VoiVod, Cinderella, Bon Jovi, Shy, Magnum, Slayer, Malice, Helloween, Overkill, Steeler, Paganini, Manowar, Status Quo, Megadeth, Lee Aaron, Flotsam and Jetsam, Motörhead, Strangeways, Rock Goddess, Georgia Sattelites, Tesla. Posters: Tour Poster '87, AC/DC, Helloween

Metal Attack '88

Monsters of Rock '88 (special), AC/DC, Europe, Def Leppard, Judas Priest, Iron Maiden, Great White, Guns N'Roses, Helloween, Testament, 220 Volt, Treat, Kiss, David Lee Roth, Megadeth, Anthrax

No. 1 (JANUARY 1987)

Deep Purple (Ritchie Blackmore), Europe, Iron Maiden (backstage with fans), Slayer, Bon Jovi/Queensrÿche, Kansas, Krokus, New bands (Cinderella, FM, Victory, Steeler, Helloween, Crimson Glory, Tesla). KK Downing (guitar special), Deep Purple (History Pt. 2)

No. 2 (FEBRUARY 1987)

Kiss, Metallica, Michael Schenker, CD in HM, Ozzy Osbourne, Magnum, Brighton Rock, Anthrax, Bruce Dickinson, Venom, Savatage, Nuclear Assault, Lemmy on beer, Vinnie Moore, Thin Lizzy (History Pt. 1) + Metallica-Poster

No. 4 (APRIL 1987)

Whitesnake (David Coverdale), Iron Maiden, Helloween, Tesla, Anthrax (own words), AIDS, ITB Agency, Shy, Lou Gramm, White Sister, Keel (Studio report), HM in Brazil, Overkill, Voi Vod, Savatage, King Diamond, Mercyful Fate, Led Zeppelin (History Pt. 1).

No. 5 (MAY 1987)

Judas Priest, Slayer, Magnum, Sex, Aids & Rock'n'Roll, Manowar, Crimson Glory, Iron Maiden, DIO (studio report), Billy Sheehan (bass player), Van Halen, Nightranger, FM, Poison, Mentors, Raven, Australian Rock, Led Zeppelin History (Pt. II). Posters: Bon Jovi, Status Quo

No. 6 (June 1987)

Accept/Udo, Slayer, Scorpions, Helloween, Groupies, Marillion (Fish), EZO, Lemmy (bass guitars), Tony McAlpine, Celtic Frost, Testament, State Trouper, Strangeways, Bay Area Report, Andy Taylor, TNT, Pretty Maids (Own Words), Led Zeppelin History (Pt. III). Posters: Slayer, Helloween

No. 7 (July 1987)

Judas Priest, Sammy Hagar, Zodiac Mindwarp, Cinderella/Bon Jovi, Stryper, Terraplane, Metallica, Rory Gallagher (guitar test), Rage, Bathory, Ozzy Osbourne, Tesla, Y&T, Georgia Sattelites, Warlock, Chrome Molly, UFO History (Pt. I)

No. 8 (August 1987)

Kiss, Anthrax, Reading (25 years), Kooga, Ratt, Metallica (drum special), DIO, WASP, New York HM, Stan Bush, Coroner, Nuclear Assault (guitar special), John Norum (ex-Europe), Judas Priest (Own Words), UFO History (Pt. II). Posters: Anthrax, Megadeth

No. 10 (October 1987)

Kiss, Warlock, Michael Schenker (studio report), Whitesnake, Blue Oyster Cult, Monsters Of Rock special, Bruce Payne (Deep Purple Manager), Reading Festival, Hades Kreator, Armored Saint (own words), Savatage, Van Halen History (Pt. 2)

No. 12 (October 19, 1987)

Warlock, Aerosmith, Celtic Frost, Kreator, Rush, Phenomena, HM Fantasy, Joey DeMaio (bass), Guns n'Roses, Faster Pussycat, Destruction (studio report), Accept, Def Leppard History (Pt. 2)

No. 13 (November 12, 1987)

AC/DC, Black Sabbath, Ray Gillen, Aerosmith (Trick or Treat), Marillion, Gypsy Queen, Iron Maiden (fanmag), Venom (studio report), John Wetton (bass player), Bad News, Chariot, Exodus, Bonfire, Victory, Twisted Sister

No. 1 (December 31, 1987)

David Lee Roth, Slayer, Anthrax, Mortal Sin, Gypsy Queen, Zodiac Mindwarp, Hellion, Triumph, Silent Rage, FM, Vinnie Appice (drummer), DIO/Warlock (live on stage), D.R.N., Aerosmith, Samson, New bands (Diamond, Jeff Paris, Lion), Whitesnake. Posters: Mötley Crüe, 1988 yearplanner

No. 6 (March 28, 1988)

Judas Priest (studio report), Alice Cooper, Dokken, L.A. Guns, The Grip, Yngwie Malmsteen, Krokus, Toxik, Rick Dufay, Chrome Molly. Posters: Scorpions, Metallica

No. 10 (May 23, 1988)

Scorpions (in USSR), Iron Maiden (live), Kingdom Come, Hawkwind, Shy, Slave Raider, Sanctuary, Overkill, UFO, Scott Gorham (classic tracks), Slayer. Posters: Status Quo, Bonfire, Kiss, Anthrax, Testament

No. 11 (June 6, 1988)

Queensrÿche's Chris De Garmo (own words), Van Halen, Metallica, Megadeth, Girls in Rock, Cinderella, David Chastain, Hit Man, Dweezil Zappa, Honeymoon Suite, Mekong Delta, Killer Dwarfs, Tony Iommi (classic tracks). Posters: Gypsy Queen, Yngwie Malmsteen

No. 12 (June 20, 1988)

Deep Purple, Helloween (studio reports), Oz Fox from Stryper (own words), Bill Wyman, Vinnie Vincent, Thrash & Speed Fan Mag Pt. 2 (Voi Vod, Kreator, Testament, Flotsam & Jetsam, Celtic Frost), Metallica (studio report), Jon Bon Jovi (horoscope), CDs in HM. Posters: Saxon, Uriah Heep

No. 13 (July 14, 1988)

Iron Maiden (over America), John Norum, Lizzy Borden, Ace Frehley (own words), Cinderella, D.R.I., Tokyo, Faith No More, Baren Cross, Riot, Judas Priest (classic tracks), Carmine Appice, Queensrÿche center spread, Acid Reign & Sacrilege (thrash metal burn up), Monsters Of Rock US '88. Posters: Scorpions, Aardschokdag

No. 15 (Cover: Iron Maiden)

Iron Maiden, David Lee Roth, Kiss, Megadeth, Guns N'Roses, Helloween, Testament, Anthrax, Razor, Uriah Heep (classic tracks), Treat (own words), Michael Schenker/Mitch Perry (guitar setup), Great White, Robin Trower, Living Colour, Ozzy, White Lion. Posters: Judas Priest, Cinderella

No. 16 (August 1988)

Metallica, AC/DC, Manowar, Slayer (own words), The Quire Boys, Europe, Mantas, Def Leppard (Fan Mag), Shout, Wolfsbane, David Coverdale (horoscope), Guitar special (Paul Gilbert, Greg Howe, Jason Becker), HM Worldwide (Stone, Violence). Posters: Iron Maiden, Ozzy Osbourne

No. 18 (Cover: Helloween)

Helloween, Bon Jovi, Joan Jett, Cozy Powell, Stage Diving Special, Last Descendants, Kruiz, Cloven Hoof, Monsters Of Rock Special, Soho Roses, Onslaught, Balaam & the Angel, Dirty Strangers, Dee Snider, Joanna Dean, Craaft, HM Worldwide (Winger, Adversity, Circus Of Power, Suicide Squad), Mortal Sin. Posters: Kiss, David Lee Roth

No. 19 (September 26, 1988)

Anthrax, Jimmy Page, Monsters Of Rock Germany (Anthrax, Testament, Great White Treat), JoJo, Ozzy Osbourne (horoscope), Atrophy, Billy Milano, Vixen, Celtic Frost, HM Worldwide (Femme Fatale, Precious Metal), Black Magic (special story). Posters: Metallica (Part II), Helloween

No. 20 (October 10, 1988)

Deep Purple, Motörhead, Uriah Heep, King Diamond, Little Angels, Angel Dust, Bon Jovi (Fan Mag), Zed Yago, Sacred Reich, Rick Allen (drum special), Living Death, Suicidal Tendencies, Slayer, Nuclear Assault, Metallica (live), Aerosmith (classic tracks). Posters: Bon Jovi, Europe

No. 23 (November 21, 1988)

Iron Maiden, Quiet Riot, Raven, Cinderella, Lita Ford, Exodus, Testament, Liege Lord, Kings X, Nightranger, Ice Age, Rock Managers, Dare (own words), center spread Dogs D'Amour. Posters: Ozzy, Queensrÿche

No. 24 (December 5, 1988)

Bon Jovi, Dokken, Fish, Michael Kuton, Quireboys, Chrome Molly, Steve Howe, Poison, K 2, Anvil, Badlands, Holy Moses, David Lee Roth (live), Kiss, Europe (Fan Mag). Posters: Celtic Frost, Lisa Dominique

No. 25 (December 88)

Magnum, Marillion, Crimson Glory, Vixen, Mr. Big, Annihilator, House Of Lords. Poster: Iron Maiden

No. 1 (January 89)

British Steel Part 1, Bon Jovi, Doro, Kai Hansen, Ozzy, Circus Of Power, Bonfire. Poster: Manowar

No. 2 (February 89)

Gary Moore, Lisa Dominique, Judas Priest, Rush, M.O.D., Tesla, British Steel Part 2. Posters: W.A.S.P., House Of Lords

No. 3 (February 89)

Dio, Vow Wow, Def Leppard, Guns N'Roses, Celtic Frost, Desperado, Acid Reign. Posters: Vixen, Scorpions, Testament, Overkill

No. 4 (March 89)

Anthrax, Zed Yago, Metal Church, Deep Purple, Exodus, Victory, Chastain. Posters: Exodus, Tesla

No. 5 (March 89)

Doro, Europe, Poison, White Lion, Kingdom Come, MSG, Slave Raider. Posters: Anthrax Pt. 1, Metal Queens

No. 6 (April 89)

Rush Fan Mag, W.A.S.P., Vixen, Black Sabbath, Mötley Crüe, Hawaii Rock, Posters: Anthrax Pt. 2, Poison

No. 7 (April 17, 89)

Living Colour, Jeff Pilson, Whiplash, Ozzy Osbourne, Queensrÿche, Kreator, The Cult, Accept. Posters: Helloween/Kingdome Come

No. 8 (May 1, 89)

Kiss, Magnum, Onslaught, Rick Emmett, Deep Purple (Rock Retro), Russia's Woodstock. Posters: Gary Moore/Annihilator

No. 9 (May 15, 89)

Sabbat, Victory, Helloween, Blue Murder, Great White, Dream Theater, British Steel, Roadreport: Doro, Roundtable: Tony Iommi & Cozy Powell. Posters: Accept, Onslaught, Manowar

No. 10 (May 29, 89)

Metal Hammer Festival: Full Report, Manowar, Acid Reign, Zed Yago, D.R.I., Kansas, Californian Dreams, Wolfsbane, Uriah Heep, French Report, Magnum, Fan Mag: Led Zeppelin. Posters: The Cult, Kreator

No. 11 (June 26, 89)

Motörhead, Queen, White Lion, Badlands, Voodoo X, Venom, Brighton Rock, Sub-Pop, The Grip, Romeos Daughter, Guy Bidmead. Posters: Guitar Heroes, Slayer

No. 12 (June 26, 89)

Metallica, White Sister, Tigertailz, Fates Warning, Savatage, Dare, Suicidal Tendencies, Roadreport: Anthrax, Euro Rock Probe, 12-Page Special: Guns N'Roses

Hurricane No. 2, Spring 1987

Tina Turner, Billy Idol, Gary Moore, Santana, Barclay James Harvest, Debbie Harry, Peter Gabriel, Whitesnake, Rock Capitals: London. Posters: Billy Idol, Peter Gabriel

Hurricane No. 3, July 1987

Scorpions, Huey Lewis, Chrissie Hynde, U2, Pink Floyd, Phil Collins, Georgia Satellites, Rock Capitals: Los Angeles. Posters: Scorpions, Lee Aaron, David Lee Roth

GENESIS SPECIAL

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ERIC ADAMS (MANOWAR)

MANOWAR'S KING OF METAL

The quest for the hottest singer in hard rock and heavy metal is as old as the music itself. Manowar's Eric Adams must be one of the main contenders for this coveted title. Be it on stage or on vinyl, Manowar, who claim to be the loudest band in the world, have blown the fuse of many a PA with their sound systems spewing out an ear-numbing 140 dB. In this band the man at the front has to be more than just a good singer - he has to have an exceptionally strong stage presence too. Eric Adams is one of the few singers who sounds better live than on vinyl. Other bands play, Manowar kill...

Eric: *"A vocal special about me? Funny, why me? (he laughs) It's a great honour!"*

It must have been a long road to where you are now. When was the first time you started singing?

Eric: *"I remember it well. I was playing electric guitar in a band with Joey. I think the band was called Jade. We were both still at high school when I first held a mike in my hand. I was just fourteen years old. I couldn't for some reason help build up the equipment that night, and I arrived just before the gig started. Joey had always recommended that I stick to just singing. I always used to make excuses, because I was scared of going on stage without a guitar. I felt really naked just holding a microphone. Joey and I discussed it for months on end, without coming to any decision. So that evening, I arrived at the concert venue just before the gig began. My Marshalls and guitars weren't there. Anyway, the concert commenced after about ten minutes, and I had no choice but to go on stage with just the mike. I've been a singer ever since."*

How long ago was that?

Eric: *"That was sometime towards the end of the Sixties. It's a real twist of fate that it was Joey who liberated me from the guitar. We later went our separate ways and played in different bands until we founded Manowar.*

Who were the biggest influences and what were the greatest successes in your career?

Eric: "The biggest success for me is when I'm accepted for exactly what I am. I don't care whether I sing in front of an audience of 20 or 20000. If you listen to the kids while you're still hanging around in your wardrobe before a show and you hear them shouting your name and singing along with every single lyric, it's great, it must be the greatest thing a musician can achieve. But it takes a long time to get there. We played one show supporting Ted Nugent in front of 20000 people at the Reunion Arena. No-one knew who we were apart from the 2-300 fans in the first few rows. By the end of the concert, we had the whole arena shouting our names. But we weren't allowed to play an encore, and we were thrown off the Nugent tour after that incident. That was amazing! We were obviously too good for Ted Nugent. Maybe being thrown off his tour was an indication that we had really taken off as a band."

How did you come to have such an unusual voice? Did you have a good teacher or are you a natural talent?

Eric: *"I've got a tough training behind me. I was constantly hoarse to start off with. My voice was useless after two gigs. Then I started working on it. I stopped going hoarse as soon I'd perfected the art of breathing properly with my diaphragm, and I haven't had any vocal problems since. Our tours are hell. You sing for six shows on six nights, and never get enough sleep. But sleep is the most important source of energy. If you lack the correct singing technique as well, there's no point in going on tour. I always take a spray with me that expands the vocal passages when you're ill. That way you can save your voice from song to song during a concert. I used to use the spray quite a lot. It's more of a psychological support these days. You know that it's there, but you don't use it. The only thing I sometimes need during live shows when I sing songs like 'Hail And Kill' or 'Wheels Of Fire', is a shot from the oxygen tube backstage."*

So you never took formal singing lessons?

Eric: *"No, never."*

How wide is your vocal range?

Eric: *"I can sing more than eight octaves these days. I've already talked to Ronnie James Dio about that. My vocal range has expanded during the years, and now it comes naturally to me, If you want to reach a certain note, you get there somehow. You just have to believe in what you're doing. The loudness of the music plays an important role as well. I can only reach the highest notes of my voice when the music around me is loud enough. I need the noise to really pressurise my ears through the headphones when I'm recording. It has to be loud! Even when I'm in the studio, I have to feel as though I'm on stage.*

I hate singing with a head voice. When you sing from your head, the music loses its balls. That's not right. Lots of good singers make the mistake of doing that. It's important to hold the mike exactly the right distance from your mouth. The sound will only distort if you bite into your mike. Sound people always really like me, because I hold my microphone just right on stage. They can register the sound during soundcheck, and leave it that way throughout the concert. It's important to speak clearly, especially when pronouncing the letters 'S' and 'T', so you're understood properly. It's important that the kids can hear me when we play live. The voice is an instrument that has to be heard as well as any other. You have to exaggerate the word endings. That way, the audience understands what you're saying."

"When you sing from your head, the music loses its balls."

Is there any specific trick that you use?

Eric: *"I've got a practising tape that I sing scales to before each show. The faster and more intensive I sing these scales, the more relaxed and versatile my voice and my lower jaw are by the time I go on stage."*

How long do these warming up and relaxation exercises take?

Eric: *"Only a few minutes. I rest my voice for the whole day before the show. That's why some people think I'm a very quiet person. You sometimes can't prepare yourself for the show at all on tour. I had to quit body building for two days once. If you do body building for just a few minutes before each show, you develop arms like Schwarzenegger. I really pump up my muscles. Once I've done my arms, I continue with my vocal chords. These exercises last five minutes at the most."*

Is there anything you're scared of as a musician?

Eric: *"I haven't had to worry about my voice too much during the last few years. A bad monitor sound is a lot worse. A good monitor sound on stage is really important for our volume. I'm scared of not being able to hear the drum sounds properly. Otherwise I look forward to every show. The only thing that matters on stage are the eighty minutes of live show. They compensate for all the s**t that goes on in the whole business. A lot of things happen quiet instinctively on stage. You can't plan with the musicians in advance what the audience will be like. Everything happens spontaneously. Sometimes, when you feel really magical on stage the whole situation feels really magical too. You have to just accept that spontaneity. Others can look after the business side of things, I'll look after the kids."*

How do you work in the studio?

Eric: *"I don't think there's any other band that works quite like us in the studio. We record drums, guitar, bass and then the vocals in that order. I need the pressure of the whole band to be able to sing well."*

How many tape channels do you normally record in the studio?

Eric: *"I need eight different multitracks for my vocals. the first four are sung exactly as we rehearsed them. I experiment on the remaining four tracks. Towards the end, we'll chose the best. The start of 'Kingdom Come' originated because of a sound engineer's mistake. He played all eight vocal tracks simultaneously. You can hear the result on the record.?*

How do you work out your vocal lines?

Eric: "I rely heavily on my overall feeling. It's the same with a guitar solo. You work out the melody starting from a certain note. Then you venture into something new. You need a lot of experience to write melodies. Joey normally comes to me and we work out the details. According to this basic idea, we compose everything live, with the whole band. Heavy metal mustn't be written with your mind. Your gut writes the music. And I don't need any tricks to sound good in the studio. What I can't sing live, will never appear on a record. That's one of the reasons I'm against singers using sampling techniques. I wouldn't stand on stage with a mike with a keyboard player behind the amp programming my entire vocals

on the keyboard. That is false! The audience wants to see you, and not a machine. I don't need to let the tape run slower in the studio, so as to reach a higher note."

Is your hearing perfect?

Eric: "I have to hit the E-flat scale during the last song 'Black Wind, Fire & Steel' without the help of any instrument. It always works really well. I don't know if you can call that a perfect pitch. It's got a lot to do with experience. My best keys are E, D and sometimes A on 'Blow Your Speakers'. E is definitely my key. You can't go deeper on a bass or a guitar either."

Which singer particularly influenced you?

Eric: "Ian Gillan. 'Child In Time' was and still is the ultimate song for me. His screaming on that song really influenced my singing to come. Geoff Tate is another singer who interests me. In the rock polls published in heavy magazines, there should really be two different categories: one should consist of the talking singers and one should include real singers. A lot of the talking singers can't sing a melody or express themselves vocally. Their 'vocals' normally only consist of quickly spoken words. Thrash bands often sing like that. We've got loads of melody even in our fastest song off the last LP 'Wheels Of Fire'. It's really difficult combining both melody and speed. Nearly all thrash singers only sing one note, and they sing it throughout the song. There are eight notes in a scale. You should use them."

"The only thing that matters on stage are the eighty minutes of live show."

Is there a particular microphone you like using best?

Eric: "I like using Electro Voice mikes best. We've already tried out a number of different mikes. Electro Voice mikes are by far the best for me. The SM 58 by Shure sounds too bassy, and doesn't bring out the trebles enough. Electro Voice mikes seem to deal best with with the range of my voice and the individual tonal colour of my voice. Since I've started singing through these mikes, even our sound man has swapped his Shure SM 58 mikes for Electro Voice. They have just brought out a new series of mikes, that are ideal for loud stage sound. We should know, seeing as we're the loudest band in the world. Most mikes have far too small a tonal range. There are singers around who sing more than eight octaves."

Why do you still use a mike cable during your stage show? Doesn't that restrict you?

Eric: "There aren't any radio controlled mikes that transmit my vocal ranges as well as a cabled mike. We were playing California, and some engineers came along with their brand new radio mikes, that apparently sounded good with with heavy metal. I tested them, and the sound was awful that night. I'm not a preacher who wants to make a speech. I want to whip the kids out of chairs, and lots of mike manufacturers forget that. It's not just coincidence that Manowar nearly always use Electro Voice speakers as well. We're the loudest band in the world with a sound that, despite the loudness, is always and not distorted. With bands like us, you can really tell the wheat from the chaff. A Manowar gig has to sound as though you're listening to the best stereo sound system in the world, with the sound volume turned up to eleven on the dial! We sound just like we look. You can't really transmit our live sound onto record. The album 'Kings Of Metal' sounds most similar to our live sound. That was because we recorded the album digitally."

"There are eight notes in the scale. You should use them."

"With bands like us, you can really tell the wheat from the chaff."

So when will be seeing the first Manowar live LP?

Eric: "A live record is something we have definitely got planned for the future. Maybe one day we'll manage to perfectly transmit our live power onto vinyl. Then we'll have finally reached our goal."

STEFAN KERZEL

MUSIC TELEVISION®

METAL HAMMER

MTV'S METAL HAMMER

Tune in to an hour of the best in heavy rock every Thursday at 21.00 hrs Central European Time (20.00 UK time) and at midnight CET on Saturdays for the repeat showing - only on MTV - Europe's first 24 hour pan-European satellite TV music channel.

MTV'S METAL HAMMER GOES IN SEARCH OF SANITY WITH ONSLAUGHT

On Sunday, 9th July, MTV's roving cameras could be found in Bristol to record a special in-depth report on Onslaught, who were due to headline at the Bristol Hippodrome that night. This was a very special gig for the band - guitarist Nige Rockett explained why before the show.

"It's our home town gig. Every home town gig we've ever played has been something special for us. We get a great crowd down - they're so responsive - the kids down here have really taken us to heart so much. And our parents are coming to see us tonight which may be slightly strange - although they'll probably be wearing ear plugs! We've really been looking forward to this gig - it's going to be a great show and we're going to give 100 per cent!"

The highlight of our report on Onslaught will be a three minute excerpt from their latest single 'Welcome To Dying' which we recorded live at the Bristol Hippodrome that night. This track is actually a staggering 13 minutes long and we asked vocalist Steve Grimmett if we could expect to see the full version of the song performed live...

"Yep, we're gonna play that to the full extent. The 7" single version is edited down to five minutes but the full 13 minute version can be found on 12", and that's what we perform live. It is quite a difficult song to perform because there are so many mood changes. It's about a guy who is on his deathbed and every night I perform the song, I have to put myself in his position to portray the song. What we do live is very close to what we do on the album." This particular track is also Nige Rockett's personal favourite on the 'In Search Of Sanity' LP. "It took a long time to write and I feel it turned out really well. It could be the song that breaks us!"

Our report will also include an excerpt from Onslaught's cover version of AC/DC's 'Let There Be Rock' plus an in-depth interview with the whole band and comments from fans attending the gig.

MTV would like to thank Onslaught, Kevin at Clown Management, London Records, and everyone at the Bristol Hippodrome who contribute to the success of our filming. We'd also like to say a big 'hello' to all the fans who stopped to chat to us after the gig!

THREE OF A KIND

During recent interviews for 'MTV's Metal Hammer' we asked three different bands the same question - "What does it mean to you, being in a band?". It's interesting to compare their answers:

Steve Grice, drummer, Onslaught:

"Everything really. Nige Rockett and I formed the band and anything we do, all the success we get, we've really well as we've put a lot of time and effort into it."

Damon Williams, bass player, Horse (London):

"It means being able to pose on Harley Davidsons...it means beer... It's a lifestyle you can't get out of, and it's all we want to do!!"

Andy Sneap, guitarist, Sabbat:

"It's what we've always wanted to do, all of us, I think. There's no way we ever wanted to have a nine to five job so what better way of enjoying yourself? It's not all fun, obviously there's a lot of hard work but it's what I've wanted to do ever since leaving school. We've all stuck at it, put a lot of hard work in and at least we're seeing some good results now."

NEW VIDEO PLAYLIST

As you'd expect of MTV, we've shown some of the hottest new videos around over the past few weeks - here's a guide to some of our favourites, so if you don't receive MTV, just think what you're missing out on!!"

Mr. Big - 'Addicted To That Rush'

The first video from this exciting new band starts as it means to go on! It's basically a performance video which starts off with some really exciting duelling between the bass guitar of ex-Dave Lee Roth bassist Billy Sheehan and the lead guitar of ex-Racer X guitar whiz Paul Gilbert. The band have just finished recording their debut album 'Mr. Big' with Producer Kevin Elson, who has previously worked with Europe and Journey. Back in March, the band blew away a standing room only crowd at The Stone in San Francisco. Since then, both Paul and Billy have been touring the U.S. doing guitar and bass clinics for Ibanez and Yamaha guitars.

Warrant - 'Heaven'

Those 'Dirty, Rotten, Filthy, Stinking Rich' boys hit MTV screens for the first time with this surprisingly sensitive, but heavy ballad called 'Heaven'. It's a really great video made up of a collage of live performance footage, backstage action, and tour bus action and gives a good overall view of what the band are all about... on and off stage!!

Faith No More - 'From Out Of Nowhere'

Faith No More have a new album out, 'The Real Thing' and a new vocalist, Michael Patton. This track is taken from the new album and rocks away very much in the vein of Living Colour and Dan Reed Network. It is basically a performance video with Michael Patton in great vocal form with a very energetic stage presence. During the filming of the video, Michael fell down and cut his hand very severely on a piece of glass - he still has the scar to prove it!

APOLOGY

Russian thrashers Kruiz are managed by Modern Media of West Germany, and *not* Doc McGhee as reported in an earlier feature about the Make A Difference rock concerts taking place in Russia in August.

VANESSA YOUNG

THE BAILEY BROTHERS

ATLANTIC CROSSING

Brits fight back *(or do they?)*. Have we really got the bands to take over from Judas Priest, Def Leppard and Iron Maiden? It's a sad state of affairs in the UK - even though our humble mag tries hard to build mountains out of mole hills and hails some of Britain's hopefuls in glorious colour, the whole UK rock scene seems geared on how well you can do at the Marquee. That's not encouraging for young bands in Scotland and Ireland. The Yanks have walked all over us and that's a fact. Ratt, Jovi, Cinderella and Dokken came through and established themselves as dance floor favourites well before any of them even played in the UK. Winger, Bullet Boys and Skid Row are following in the same footsteps. At least we were leading the field once upon a time in the female department with Girlschool and Rock Goddess, but how do they compare with the likes of Vixen, Zed Yago and Gypsy Queen?

So what have we done to fight back? We tried to copy the Americans by writing wishy washy melodic crap, hoping for that elusive recording contract - look what happened to Terraplane. Why bother? Radio One won't be adding you to their 'A' listed playlist. They prefer soap stars and page 3 bimbos who can't sing but can con silly school kids into buying their pathetic tunes.

WHERE'S THE FUN GONE?

When the Bailey Brothers were on the road six nights a week bands like Saxon, Leppard, Motorhead, Maiden and Diamond Head were playing the small clubs around the UK performing one hundred per cent for their fans - sure they would drop the odd note or forget the odd line but they didn't care because the band were having fun and the fans loved it. We are talking rock n'roll here - forget the charts - get up there and enjoy it. Leave the hairspray and lipstick for your girlfriends and kick some ass - the good old fashioned British way - then we can begin to climb back.

And there's more... Yes, don't even think about slackening up because there's more U.S. bands waiting to capitalise on the U.K. rock scene. Warrant are making progress. Rock City Angels and Circus Of Power could follow the G N'R trend already packing them in back home.

NITRO - featuring guitar star Michael Angelo, they have an album out called O.F.R. *(Out F***in' Rageous!)*. And it is!

TYKETTO - featuring drummer Michael Clayton *(who played in Dreamer with White Lion's Vito Bratta)* and Danny Vaughn *(ex-Waysted)*, they have already opened up for the Bullet Boys and, with songs like 'Go For Your Gun' and 'Bourbon Street', look set for bigger and better things to come.

HURRICANE - could reach gail force by Christmas.

VOODOO X - they have a great album out called 'Volume One - The Awakening'. Their image is really cool - a band to look out for. We hope to have an interview next issue.

JETBOY - another band you will be hearing about in the near future. Formed by Fernie Rod and rhythm guitarist Billy Rowe in San Francisco, featuring Sam Yaffa *(ex-Hanoi Rocks)*.

BADLANDS and **MR. BIG** have the big names and labels to ensure they make an assault on the UK and that's just a few bands to look out for. Oh Boy - have we Brits got some fierce competition.

CONTACT THE STARS

To round up our American theme here's some more contact addresses that you have requested:

WARRANT
c/o Weintraub Entertainment
11111 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90025

BON JOVI
P.O. Box 326
Fords, NJ 08863

VAN HALEN
DAVID LEE ROTH
c/o W.B.R.
3300 Warner Blvd.
Burbank, CA 91516

W.A.S.P.
POISON
c/o 1370 Ave Of The Americas
New York, NY 10019

WHITESNAKE
BLUE MURDER
Y&T
c/o 9136 Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90069

SCORPIONS
P.O. Box 5220
D-3000 Hannover 1
West Germany

Be sure to send a large S.A.E.; Tell them the Bailey Bros gave you their address and please attend our funeral!

D.I.Y. GUITAR HEROES!

If you're a guitar teacher you're going to hate us for this little piece 'cos we think you could become history! The new era of guitar heroes will be taught by stars they adore in the comfort of their own homes. 'Hot Licks' videos will be on the shelves of many a young musician in the near future. How many times can you ask your guitar teacher to show you something before he or she gets cheesed off? With a video all you have to do is pause and rewind until it sinks in and who do you respect most - the Joe Bloggs or the Vinnie Moores of this world?!!

There are also videos for bidding drummers and we asked Pete Gill *(ex-Motorhead, Saxon)* to tell us what he thought of the one by Bon Jovi's Tico Torres:
PETE *"Very good! I like his playing in Bon Jovi, and this video shows Tico can play all different styles I think a lot of young players can benefit from this video because it's not too technical. I love his use of mallets and cymbal choking - very enjoyable indeed."*
So there you have it. Hot Licks videos could set you on the way to stardom. Check out Metal Tech, MH-issue 13, volume 4, for more details.

Pic: Tony Mottram

JEFF PILSON

A vocalist before he joined Dokken on bass, Jeff looks likely to be the first out of the starting blocks with his new band Flesh And Blood, a heavy and melodic act with a blues feeling. A few rocking tunes already completed are 'Kill For The Love Of God', 'Snake Eyes' and 'I Put My Love In You', a typical Dokken tune, but for us it will never be the same again - we shall see! The previous Dokken members are 'under lock and key' in rehearsals so let's wait until someone 'unchains the night' *(it gets worse!)*.

Later this year the Bailey Brothers are off to Russia and start a new TV show and a new radio show so all the big names will be coming your way under the B.B.'s logo.

Your contact address for the B.B.'s is
166-198 Liverpool Road,
London N1 1LA

TIN MACHINE METAL FANS

It's true - David Bowie and his band have been watching MTV's Metal Hammer every week while they were recording their album in Switzerland and have become big fans of the show. A phone call from Bowie to the Baileys resulted in an invitation to introduce the band on stage at the Bradford St. Georges Hall. Tin Machine would like us to inform you that they are not a pop band! Their video 'Under The God' was seen on the Metal Hammer show in July. We win the bet - send us the money Mr. Bowie!

STOP PRESS: We are informed that Little Angels will be supporting Kingdom Come on their forthcoming UK tour.

EURO-ROCK

THE NEW WAVE OF SPANISH HEAVY METAL

VIVA ESPANIA!

Welcome to the land of Bullfights and Paella... and scores of pink-faced English tourists scoffing cheap wine and spending the nights lying awake in their hotel beds recovering from painful bouts of holiday tummy. Unlucky holiday makers might have to be forced to listen to the hotel disco screeching out Euro-pop at the same time. But Spanish music doesn't automatically mean easy-listening dance music or flamenco. Some UK readers will already be familiar with the aptly titled 'Old Wave Of Spanish Heavy Metal', with its bands like Banzai, Baron Rojo *(who once played at the Reading Festival)*, Ubus, Santa, Muro, Tarzan and the Tigres *(a band who played the rounds of the London clubs a few years ago)*. They might even have heard of European new comers Niagara who recently toured the UK after the release of their debut LP on the Killerwatt label. And Spain's rock music scene has been changing considerably during the last few months, so we've lined up some of the hottest new talents in our special Spanish heavy metal survey.

There are loads of excellent rock bands playing the Spanish club circuit at the moment, and most of the bands sing in English, and with a bit of luck a lot of them will soon be competing on the world market up amongst the Scandinavians and the Germans. Take a closer look at some of these bands who are doing their utmost to make it in the international world of rock 'n' roll. One of the problems is the record companies reluctance to take Spanish heavy metal seriously, but there is also a serious lack of clubs and venues where Spanish bands can play. Thankfully, the situation is beginning to look a lot more hopeful, so if you're going to Spain this in year on your summer hols, keep your eyes peeled for some of these exciting new names!

MANZANO

There's no doubt that Manzano are the most successful band on the Spanish heavy metal scene. The band started out in Barcelona under the guidance of frontman Jose Antonio Manzano *(Who'd previously been a member of Iberian rock luminaries Banzai and Zero)* and his Axe-wielding co-hort Tony Valles-Baille. Tony is a young and exceptionally fast guitarist with his musical root firmly planted in the Malmsteen school of playing, although when quizzed about his current favourite, he'd be more likely to cite Paul Gilbert as his hero!

The guys wrote most of the tracks off their debut album 'Red Hot *(released on GBBS Records)* as a team, except for the song 'Fool For Your Love, which is a little gem written by the bands ex-keyboarder Xavier Puig. Juan Maurel on rhythm guitar, Pepe Bao on bass and Ramon Pinyol complete the line-up. Manzano played the Spanish Monsters Of Rock festival last year, and they are at present waiting for the album 'Red Hot' to be released world-wide. The follow-up album, still without title, will probably be released by mid-October, and at the same time the band will be undertaking a few important live dates. If you get the chance, take a closer look at these passionate romeos: their LP 'Red Hot' must be one of the more exciting debut releases of the year, even by international standards!

SANGRE AZUL

Sangre Azul *(Blue Blood)* originated out of opposition to the classic Spanish metal bands like Baron Rojo and Obus who were all jumping the US influenced AOR bandwagon. They were the first Spanish band ever to get a contract with a major label *(EMO Hispavox, who invested a lot of money promoting the band)*.

Sangre Azul started their career in 1986 with a line-up that had been put together on the spur of the moment, and in that line-up they promptly won the 'Villa De Madrid' award. This led to the guys recording their first twelve inch single, and shortly afterwards they laid down the tracks for their first LP 'Obsession' at the 'Mediterreano Studios' on Ibiza *(The LP showed considerable influences of bands like Dokken, King Kobra and Cinderella)*.

There was a change in the original line-up that consisted of lead guitarist Carlos Raja, rhythm guitarist J.A. Martin, Julio Diaz on bass, singer Tony and drummer Luis Santurde, before the band went on tour tour. Although J.A. Martin had even recorded the guitar parts the second album 'Cuerpo a Cuerpo', it was Juanjo Melero who toured with the band. Hispavox recently released the bands' third LP 'El Silencio De La Noche', that will soon also be available in an English version as well.

LEGION

Legion, infamous thrash mad dogs from Barcelona will be releasing their dangerous sounding debut album called 'Lethal Liberty' in September on GBBS Records. Lead guitarist Quimi Montanes was one of three founding members of Rigor Mortis. After having searched the streets of London for a whole year trying to blag a record deal, after which Quimi returned to the sunny Spanish coast, to a place Vissalar de Mar, where Legion started out as a trio in January '87. The line-up included singer/bass-player Jonathan Dolcet, drummer Pepe Segura and the already mentioned Quimi. Xisco Martinez joined the band in May 1988, when the band also started playing cover versions of fave bands like Metallica, Anthrax and SOD, as well as their own material during their live club gigs like the

'KGB' in Barcelona, or the 'Inferno' club in Tharrassa. One of the reasons for the successful deal with GBBS was because the band had already recorded a great four-track demo.

DESIRE

As veterans of the Spanish rock scene, Desire finally decided to record their first self-titled LP in May 1988, with then help of Alfredo Puente. The album features the rich guitar sounds excellently played by founder member Javi Gomez. Get into the emotional vocals courtesy of 'Bon Jovi Clone' Nick Llorach, who swapped camps from another well-known local band just before the recording of the debut album commenced. This band play heavy music, that still manages to stay catchy. The album includes strong hymn-like choruses, and a very melodic guitar lines played by Javi Gomez, a big Eddie Van Halen fan. All this proves to be a combination that will only encourage the bands' commercial potential. One thing is clear: Each band member is an excellent musician in their own right, and regardless of influences they admit to having by other rock heroes, each band member has his own unique style,including bass-player J. Thomas and drumming perfectionist Jose Gomez. The band regularly prove how brilliant they play live . The album includes tracks that are worth a closer listen and it includes a wide variety of musical styles. Desire are at present writing new songs for their forthcoming album, that has not yet been given a title. At present all indications are that the band are on the verge of drastically changing their whole sound.

HAMLET

The excellent albums by bands like Niagara and Sangre Azul were all recorded fairly recently, but the Madrid metal scene has been bringing forth such astounding rock talent in the shape of bands like Hamlet and Hiroshima for quite a while now! Hamlet first got together in November 1986. The boys immediately started recording three excellent demos in Madrid's M20 studios. The response was immense, and Hamlet found themselves in the position to complete a successful tour of Spain the next year. The band returned into the studio in February '88 to record their debut LP 'Life Goes On' - with no outside help at all! The following actors are involved in the band Hamlet: J. Molly *(v)*, Luis Tarriaga *(g,v.)*, Danny *(b,b.)*, and Javier Carluccio *(dr,v)* These extremely young guys play a hard melodic rock and the songs are cleanly and well written.

BRUQUE

Once he'd made a bit of a name for himself with the band Tigres, bass-player Pedro Bruque then decided to form his 'own' band - The band aptly titled Bruque started out in 1987. The band's first move was to tour extensively under the banner 'El Heavy No Es Violencia' *(Heavy Metal doesn't have to be violent)*, before recording the debut 'En Mitad De Camino' at the Alilia studios. Domingo Gallardo *(v)*, Alberto Arias *(g)*, Toni Larossa *(dr)* and Antonio Gomez *(g)* supported Mr. Bruque in recording the LP, but in the following couple of years the band went through various line-up changes. The boys have just finished work on their second album that will be available - in Spanish shops at least - by October, and that will also include a few songs sung in English. Apart from working with Bruque, Pedro is also heavily involved with his project the Spanish Heavy Metal Collective COHE, who promote concerts and festivals as well as distributing records and releasing a little info magazine with news, dates and everything else worth knowing about the Spanish HM scene. You can get more information on COHE's activities if you write to the following address:
Colectico Heavy National,
Apartado de Correos 95057,
08080 Barcelona.

F*** OFF

F*** Off are a really fast and ambitious thrash band from Mataro. They quickly gained a reputation for being a really energetic live band while playing the local circuit, where they also supported bands like Muro and Manzano. One can only compare the way these guys thrash with bands like Slayer and Anthrax. F*** Off were without doubt the first speed metal band in Spain, and they started shaking rock roots on the Iberian peninsula in 1986. When they recorded their first single two years later, they proved their ability to express themselves lyrically especially, thanks to the bands main songwriter and frontman Joe, whose claim to fame is being an old friend of Joey Belladonna. The psychotic riffs played by guitar heroes Pep and Ringeling contrast with the powerful rhythm section that consists of Jackson *(b)*, and Miki *(dr, v)* The bands persistence proved worthwhile, and by 1988 they had signed a recording contract with the Claxton record label, and recorded their debut album 'Another Sacrifice' in the Mediterranean studios. In June of this year lead singer Joe left the band because of 'musical difference's. So what's new guys?

BARRICADA

The four boys hailing from the Northern Spanish town of Pamplona *(where last years Spanish Monster Of Rock festival took place)* have tried repeatedly to attempt new musical directions, by just pulling away the familiar heavy floor away from underneath your feet.. It seems sad that this is the only one of the new Spanish rock bands mentioned, who actually incorporate real 'Hispanic' influences into their sound and lyrical contents. They've already released six amazing albums, their most recent release being the album 'No Hay Tregua' on Polygram. Barricada are more radical, rougher and ruder than any other band on the scene. Their lyrics incorporate accusations against the military service and they cry out against pollution as well as singing about the usual much-loved hardcore topics. Barricada have been around since 1982, and they continued despite the sudden death of the bands' first drummer. He was replaced by Fernando, and the current line-up also includes Boni *(g, v)* Alfredo Piedrafita *(g)* and Enrique 'El Drogas' Villareal *(b, v)*. They are the only band we've mentioned here who are also capable of filling larger stadiums.

Joan Singla

AFTER HOURS NOW IS THE HOUR!

After months of hard work and preparation, After Hours seem set to mount their break through into the upper strata of Euro rock. The band from Southampton, the British port where great ocean liners once set sail for America, which has not been famous as a breeding ground for rock talent. After Hours aren't especially concerned with putting the town's name on the map. They are however determined to crack the resistance of the media and music industry at large to new U.K. bands and with their tireless manager Mike Fry at the helm, After Hours are currently launching a fresh onslaught on our consciousness.

The band have been busy recording an album in studios in Munich which was where I talked to their lead singer Welsh born John Francis recently.

"We've been in Germany recording for seven weeks," said John, *"and the next job is to start mixing. We've been in Arco studios and we are very happy with the results. The album is brilliant! The songs are a bit heavier than they were on our first After Hours album but they stay in the same vein, which is AOR rock"*

After Hours don't claim to be a thrash outfit. Their strength lies in the well crafted song and rounded, but hard hitting rock performance, an approach which has over the past year won them new friends and a big following, particularly in Germany.

"We share the writing between the different members of the band," explains John who has been a pro singer for six years. *"In fact we have recently changed the line up a bit. We have got a new drummer and a new bass player. The drummer is Al Jackman from The Outfield and Dave Marshall is on bass. He used to work with Sanctuary music. They replaced Mark Addison our Canadian born drummer and Martin Walls who was on bass. I'm definitely much happier with the new guys. They are brilliant and of course they are featured on the new album."*

They are hoping to have world wide release of the album in September or October on a major label. John cannot reveal the name of the label yet as his lips are sealed, hopefully not a permanent condition as this may render further singing somewhat difficult.

"Oh no, its just that I've been told I can't disclose the name of the label yet. We have signed the deal but its all hush hush. And we can't give you the name of the album yet. We haven't got a working title either. We haven't got a clue what it will be called, although we have been throwing a few ideas about."

BLOOD

There is hard-core info about the band's material however. There will be two singles released and a video before the album comes out.They have been working on such songs 'Girl Like You,' 'Heart Ache' 'Samantha' and 'Blood On Silver.' There will be around ten tracks altogether many of them featuring the vocal harmonies that are the band's forte.

"We aim for a good, rich sound and there will be even more harmonies than there were on the first album we made. We also have Andy Nye featured heavily on the keyboards. The album was produced by Malcolm Luker."

There is a tendency for U.K. bands to record abroad, for a variety of reasons from tax to climate. Why did After Hours choose to record in Germany?

Said John: *"The studios are very good over here, and its very convenient. The rates are cheaper too. When we return to Britain we will be playing a gig at the Marquee in London August 11. Everyone will get a chance to see the new line up and we will put a lot of the new songs into the set. It will be a showcase for the album in effect. We have been in Germany for two months so we will be looking forward to getting home although the band is quite popular here. We played at the Metal Hammer Christmas show here a couple of years ago and we have played at a couple of festivals since. But apart from the Marquee there will be no more gigs until the album is released. We have got to go to Vienna to do a video which will take up a lot of time."*

When the band get back to do regular live work, will their new line up give them more power?

"Yeah definitely. We are in rehearsal and it is all ready sounding a lot tighter and stronger. Our image is as casual as ever though! Whatever is in the wardrobe - we put on. We are not into a glam image, we are a down to earth rock'n'roll band. And that's what people want. When we played at the Marquee last February the fans liked our down home style. It was a brilliant night and we had a maximum crowd so hopefully it will be the same again in August. I heard that the original manager Jack Barrie left the club after many years. There's a big of gossip for you."

The band's debut LP 'Take Off' was released in August last year on FM Revolver through RCA. They were formerly known as XS and changed their name after the arrival of a certain Aussie pop band. Critics greeted the band as a combination of Foreigner and Bon Jovi and quickly attracted a following of AOR lovers, although they deny any connection with wimp rock, hair gel and deodorant sprays.

After Hours are feeling confident about their future. *"We are going to promote the album and hopefully it will sell. Hopefully it will sell millions - ha, ha! And then maybe we'll be striking a blow for Southampton."*

GEORGE GUBBINS

LAYING DOWN THE LAW

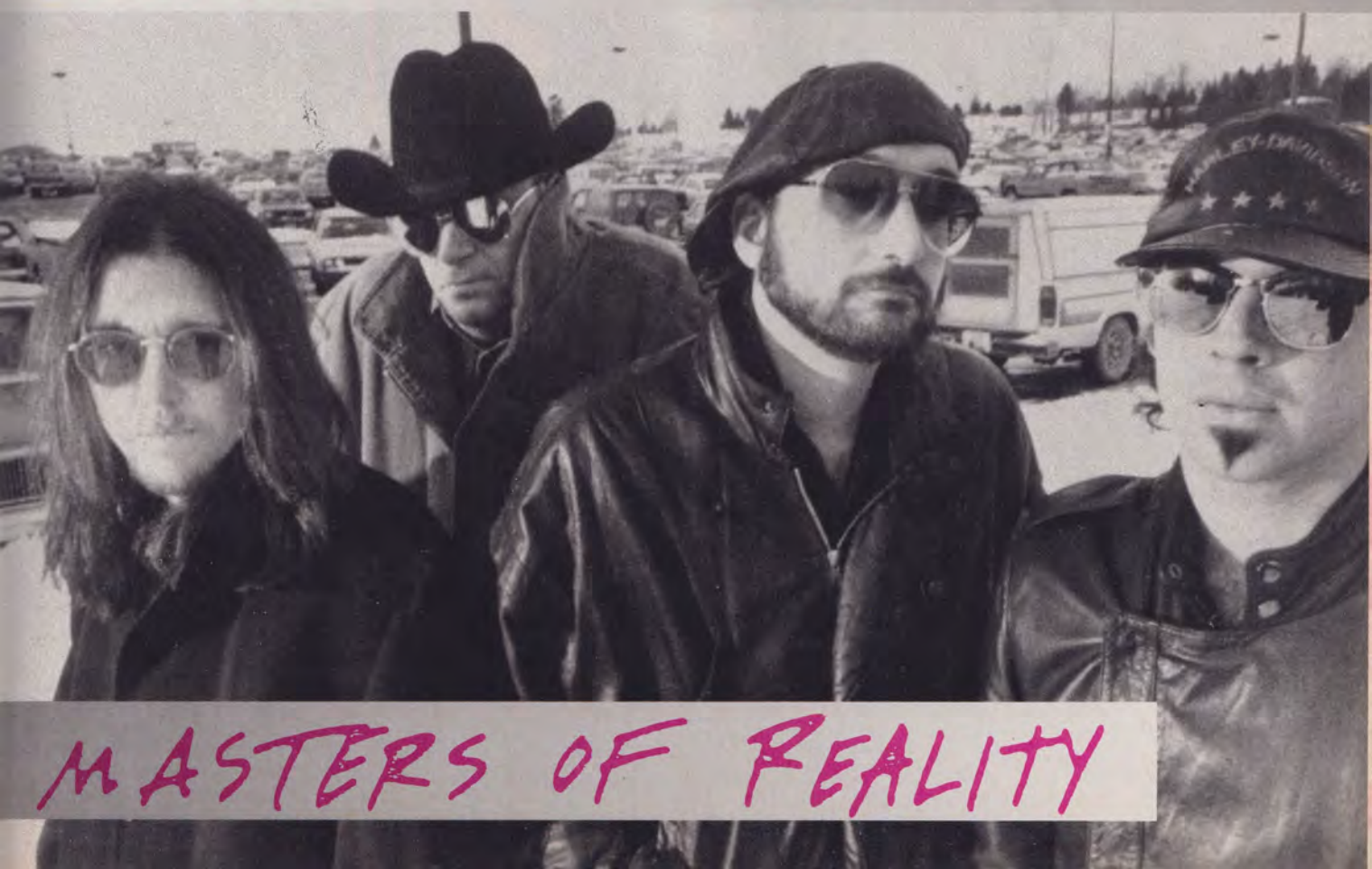
Success has come late for Masters Of Reality, and they finally released their debut LP this year. This was thanks to American production maestro Rick Rubin, who picked up the Masters for his brand new label baby, Def American. The first result of the bands' work with the LA based producer, famed for his excellent taste, is an unusual blues-rock album, on which traditional blues elements are tarted up and combined with the bands hard rocking basics.
Master Of Reality were in Amsterdam recently, where they played at a private party. While they were over in Europe, we decided to talk to guitarist/singer Chris Goss, Tim Harrington (g), and Googe (b), - drummer Vinnie Ludovico was still fast asleep. The band seemed happiest talking about the blues as well as... Rick Rubin

Googe: *"Ah, this is the life. For the first time in my career as a musician, I feel like a star. Hahaha. We received the offer to play in Amsterdam a few days ago. We accepted immediately. It's a shame we didn't have the time to play a few more gigs."*
Chris: *"The whole show yesterday was a typical record company affair with a lot of press and record company employees. Audiences like that don't really react very much. But we still had fun. At least it was an opportunity to say 'hi' to Europe."*
Tell us about the band and how you all got together.
Tim: *"We're all from Syracuse, that's about a four hour drive from New York. The sun doesn't shine very much there."*
Chris: *"But misery can be inspiring as well. Tim and I started out in 1981 as a two-man combo. We used drum machines and synthesisers and created a very electronic sound. Only after we added a 'real' drum, did the sound roughen up. Some of the songs were based around synthesisers, others had an acoustic structure."*
Tim: *"We sent a few really cheap demos to the record companies, but no-one was interested. We recorded a better tape later, and that's how we got the deal with Rick Rubin."*
What was it like working with him?
Chris: *"It's funny, he's got bags of humour. And he's also a complete perfectionist. The recordings lasted six months."*
Tim: *"They didn't last six months! That sounds as though we were useless. In the six months we also did the pre-production and the mix, the real recordings took far less time."*
Chris: *"Good, lets say four months."*
Tim: *"The good thing about working with Rick Rubin is that he involved us in all the decisions. He never did anything without asking us in advance."*

DIFFERENT MOODS

There are lots of different styles in your in your sound, but you could still split the LP into a blues side and a heavy rock side.
Tim: *"Yeah, that's got a lot to do with moods. Some of the songs somehow sound 'bombastic', others are more straightforward. That just shows how different we can be. Basically, I don't think it's worth talking about, but with most records you can tell after listening to the first track what the rest of the album will sound like. In the olden days each album had its ups and its downs, these days records are normally recorded according to the motto: "That's it, you're not getting any more..."*
Chris: *"There are lots of bands that change styles."*
Tim: *"I wouldn't say that we jump from one style to the other, but we try and express different moods."*
Do you think that you've managed to prove to people that not all music can be pushed away in pidgeon holes like that?
Tim: I don't thing we've achieved that. People will always compare us with something or other, because that's the only way to describe music these days."
Chris: *"We live in a time when everything has to be categorised. You press a button, and a list of things that belong in particular categories appears on the screen. We don't let people just pidgeon-hole us away though. Our next LP could sound like ... I don't even know myself."*
Chris, I noticed that you have a really relaxed way of singing, even during the harder numbers.
Chris: *"When we recorded the vocal overdubs, Rick said to me: 'Try to sing really quietly, sing like you talk.' I really liked the idea, I've always liked people like Dean Martin or the music Robert Plant does these days. It's a great contrast to hear a hard song with relaxed vocals."*
You seem to rely on that method when you play live as well.
Chris: *"Yeah, but only since we've started playing with a good monitor system. I used to have to scream out of necessity!"*
Wasn't it frustrating to have to wait that long?
Tim: *"No, we never had a particular aim. We met when we felt like it, and we occasionally played live. Sometimes we didn't do anything for months on end. We're lazy pigs. Hahaha!"*
It took long for things to start happening with you. Tim, you've got a wife and kids, and you bought a house recently as well. Now you have to go on tour all of a sudden, and you'll be away from home a lot, won't that be difficult?
Tim: *"That's all part of the life. I can't see any problems."*
Googe: *"We've built a baby's chair inside the bus."*

ROBERT HEEG



Carry On Rock 'N' Roll

THERE SEEMS to be only two schools of thought on 'our' Lisa. You either belong to the Lisa Jihad, a fundamentalist tribe of under 16 year old virgins who congregate in the front row at Lisa gigs in a vain attempt to soak up some of the pseudo-sexual odours emanating from the general direction of Yorkshire's top sex symbol. Or you're one of the number who see the girl as 'the crone with the drone', and have decided that she's not worth even gobbing on. So what's your favourite Jock rock hack doing writing about the pout-on-legs and which camp does he fall into?

The answer is neither. It's too simplistic to dismiss the Lisa Dominique Experience as a hollow bimbo with a manipulative eye for easy coverage and all the presence of a tin of pineapple chunks. Compared to the utterly professional American rock queen Lorraine Lewis, Lisa's as British as fish 'n' chips, seaside 'Kiss Me Quick' hats and Eddie 'The Eagle' Edwards. Full marks for trying, even if, Frank Bruno style, she gets knocked out by the American opposition. In 'Carry On Heavy Metal' Lisa would have the Barbara Windsor role, all slap 'n' tickle on stage but very little in the way of explicit sexuality.

IN THE FLESH (ahem), Lisa is a hell of a lot more attractive than she appears in the press shots. In them she is invariably plastered with enough make-up to keep an animal testing lab working overtime for a month, and invariably sporting a fellatial pout that would put the girl in the Cadbury's Flake advert to shame.

In the flesh she's not pushy, and she doesn't pepper her conversation with nudge-nudge innuendo. Very much the (good looking) girl next door, in fact.

A certain 'other' rock mag just dished out a fairly damning character assassination of the old trout masquerading as an album review. Right of reply here kid, if you want it?

"Well, I think it's a shame when a qualified writer can write such bulls***, but to be quite honest all I can say is f*** off."

Not very ladylike language, Lisa?

"I don't really care about what reviewers have to say about the album, coz as I see it none of them really know anything about me or my stuff. Doesn't bother me at all, in fact keep writing it, as long as they spell me name right!"

But surely people know at least a little about you by now, Lisa? You've been around long enough.

"That's true, I've been in the business now for five years and y'know there's some people who haven't liked me from the start and don't like me now no matter what. So it's a little bit of an apartheid against what I do, and those certain people have got a hold of my album to review it."

ONE RUMOUR I've heard circulating quite widely in the biz is that you simply won't take a telling from anyone. True?

"I suppose that is fair comment. I listen to people who I think understand where I'm coming from. I don't meet too many people who do understand where I'm coming from, they've usually made their minds up before they've met me. A hell of a lot of people in the business have seen me photographs, so they obviously have an opinion before they speak to me. I'm quite strong headed and it takes a lot for me to take advice that I'd agree with, but I'm probably my own worst critic."

So who comes up with advice you will listen to?

"I'll listen to some advice from Dave Roberts at my label F.M. Revolver, he's the head A&R guy there. Obviously I disagree with him about a lot of things too, but I agree with some of them. Michael Machet, my lawyer, he advises me one somethings, Marino my bother gives me advice sometimes. I have to trust someone to listen to their advice."

Mmm, I think the fact that Lisa remains without a manager at this point says something. Lisa listens to Lisa's opinions and few others, I've got to confirm.

SO, WHERE *is* Lisa coming from. What is it that she thinks so few people can grasp? Explain, lass, explain!

"Well, my direction with this album is to make the best album of my ability, and I'm really proud of it, I think it's a great album, I think it stands up to other rock albums especially on an independent level. Where a lot of bands would disagree with me about managers and things like that is they don't want to get involved in the side of doing their own work with it. I'm used to doing the work as well as the music side, it means a lot to me. I'm a renegade in the rock business in that I manage myself, I don't have anyone sat behind a desk telling me what to do. My direction is just to be a great rock 'n' roller and make great rock 'n' roll albums."

IT HAS to be said that Lisa's very showbiz, perhaps even more so because she's working "the clubs" in the great tradition of Northern entertainers. The surprising thing about her is the fact that, unlike most club performers, she seems to have learned little about exercising control over a rowdy club crowd. Lisa thinks "the fans behave really well". Fer Gawd'd sake! They're a rabble of bottom pinching young pervs and you know it!

"You've got to remember that those are the people who put you where ever you end up, and the kids that have already bought the album love the stuff. If they want to go crazy at the front they've paid their money to have a good time and it really doesn't bother me. I think they're wonderful and I know that sounds corny, it's the truth. The fans have been with me since the beginning and they mean more to me than any manager or anything."

And paying their money gives them the right to cop a feel, does it?

"Obviously not, but you're not going to stop that. You're in a difficult situation when you're in clubs, y'know you're within arm's reach of most of the kids and I would find it strange if they didn't try to grab you. I don't see any point in complaining about it, though obviously I don't particularly like it, nobody likes to be grabbed by people they didn't know."

Maybe people who don't take you seriously would give you more of a chance if you took a stand on concert gropers?

"Yeah, but that's only the way the press has written about my live shows.

LISA DOMINIQUE

The reviews I get, the bad ones just go 'well, Lisa sticks her tits out, Lisa does this and the fans love it'. That's just one opinion and I don't think anyone with an open mind would believe everything they read in the press. It proves a point when the owners of clubs I play say to me 'well, Lisa, I didn't believe you could sing but you can'. They know I work very hard when I'm on stage, and obviously I like acting sexy, what's wrong with that? We're living in the 1980's, there's nothing wrong with that. A lot of my image and music is pointed at the teenage market, they seem to be the ones that're saying 'f*** the press, cause we want to come and see you'."

WHAT ABOUT the female musicians who do write to Metal Hammer, saying that they can't be taken seriously as guitarists/ drummers/ singers because people like yourself project a stereotype about females in rock?

"I'd say to them that they don't know me. They see the pictures, see the reviews and form an opinion. If they could go into the business, last five years, get an album out and get as far as I've got with the amount of good and bad press, controversial press, that I've got, I take my hat off to them. I don't see how they could feel that I'm putting them down, you know and I know that there's a lot of hard work goes into getting this far and it's not just a case of going out and saying 'look at me, I'm sexy'. I'd say to them, don't judge a book by the cover. I'd tell them to go for it, I wish them all the best."

PRESUMABLY LISA didn't emerge from the womb a fully formed Yorkshire sexbomb with sequins on. Tell me about the younger Lisa in Hull.

"Well, I'm proud of where I come from, it's a beautiful fishing port. But I went to an all-girls Catholic school. So I suppose I was a little bit of a rebel, I wanted to be in a rock band and doing everything you're not supposed to. I got thrown out of the music class" no jokes please! "and expelled. But what is there to do in Hull except make your own fun?"

Pics.: Steve Schofield

So how did the rest of your class end up?

"I've only kept one good friend, and she lives in Jersey. I see some of them pushing prams and stuff. They settle down and have a family and you see them five years on from school days and they look like they're thirty. Nobody I knew has done anything crazy like gone into the music business, but they always thought I was a bit weird anyway."

And now, I think, we've got to the heart of the matter. Lisa is an easy target for a hack with an axe to grind, and she does bring a lot of it on herself. She could do with learning a lot more about remaining in command of a crowd (plenty of other female acts manage), and she might gain something by opening her ears even to people she doesn't trust.

But, and it's a big *but*, what else would her fiercest critics have her do? Faced with the choice of a career as a window dresser, settling down like her classmates to the 9 to 5 life or using her God given looks as a shortcut to a little slice of rock 'n' roll infamy, I *can't* bring myself to complain about her choice. Since rock 'n' roll first started, kids like Lisa have seen it as the only possible escape route out of a drudgy lifestyle. In that respect Lisa's no different from any other musician, whether thrash, glam or straight ahead metal.

Would half her critics have done any differently?

SO THE last words to Lisa on her new album...

"It's a rock 'n' roll album, if people want to say it's dated, by all means...I'm not trying to say 'look at this, it's new', because rock and roll is not new, and the sooner some writers realise that the better."

MARK DAY

POISON

FROM GLAM RAGS TO RICHES!

Or: How Fishnet Fantasies Turn To Solid Gold Reality

Our first encounter with Poison was on 17th May 1986. We remember the night well. It was one of those fragrant spring evenings, the kind that make you really appreciate Los Angeles. The Country Club, a notorious West Coast rock hangout was packed with black lace and fishnet stockings. One had to rub against the press of bulging mammaries in order to get anywhere. Lots of fun if you're male, annoying and unsettling otherwise. Thank goodness there was a press section.

Warrant, featuring a black-haired lead vocalist performed some very generic rock and roll. The crowd yawned, and dabbed cigarette ash on the stage. This was obviously not what they had come to see.

The lights go on and there is a mad dash toward the ladies' room. Amidst the preening competition in the mirror, one notices that hair spray and cigarette smoke have destroyed the ozone layer in the WC, and lipstick traces lace the paper towels heaped in the trash. Truly this environment evinces the decline of Western civilization.

"Do you think Bret will notice me?" a girl inquires. She's obviously below the drinking age of 21, nurses a daiquiri and sports purple eye shadow. *"It's my present to him."* she retorts, as she straightens her bustier, so it just covers her nipples.

"I want to have C.C.'s child," admits another adolescent, teasing her hair into a thoroughly unnatural contortion.

"They're going on soon, we'd better get back to our spots before the lights go out."

The house spots dim and the audience of 1,000 (female:male ratio 3:1) emits a long peal of delight. Bret Michaels, C.C. DeVille, Rikki Rockett, and Bobby Dall hit the stage looking like advertisements for the local church rummage sale; boas, lame, combustible hair, florescent lipstick. *"If you want to make an event special you dress in extreme fashion."* advises Rikki on Poison's bizarre appearance.

With obvious glee Bret undulates about the stage performing the bulk of Poison's then newly released LP. 'Look What The Cat Dragged In.' As Bret cavorts with an exaggerated Elvis Presley swivel of the hips, he is trying desperately not to wipe the sweat from his face for fear he might muss up his makeup. At the close of 'Cry Tough' he catches his breath. He beams at the audience, obviously elated. He takes off his bolero hat and fluffs up his hair.

"As you know we've got a very open door policy with Poison," he bubbles between gasps of air. *"You know you don't have to look like Poison to enjoy Poison. We strive as much with our personalities as we do with our looks. The music is the most important factor. So have a good time."*

Bret rips off his shirt, revealing a tight little body ripe for puberty. Rikki, displaying whatever drum flair he can muster, attempts an enticing introduction to 'Talk Dirty To Me.' Bret humps the stage. The nymphettes are in heaven. Bobby seats himself atop a speaker with a picture of him painted on it and smirks. The beat is infectious, and what is lost in delivery is more than compensated by enthusiasm. Females bounce in adoration. Males, not wanting to seem too overwhelmed by this collection of glam fags, nod their heads in approval.

It doesn't matter that the album is doing nothing. Poison have been popular around Los Angles for more than a year, since they arrived from their home base of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The only objective this evening is to have fun, which Poison; led by Bret's overwhelming, loquacious demeanor; aptly supplies.

C.C., who reminds one of Yogi Bear in Vaudeville launches into a flashy, noisy guitar solo. It's obvious he thinks he's a superb guitarist, but no one in the audience as quite as convinced as he. Instead they grin at his comic demeanor. From behind the monitors, glowing with illuminations of Poison's faces, the non-soloists emerge, clutching huge bags laden with training bras graced by Poison's swirly logo embossed in black by the left cup. There is a mad lunge for the bras, and the band takes the pleasure of tossing them toward some particularly viable commodities. The group leaps into *"I Want Action."* C.C. and Rikki come forward to pounce Bret with cans of silly string. The scene is crazed. The audience adores it. Seldom has one seen a club act that is so much fun.

"What we may lack in musical ability, we make up in enthusiasm," chides Bret backstage after the

show, beaming from under a captain's hat. *"Our band has the 'If you can't do it right, do it anyway approach,' so we keep moving forward."*

EXPLANATIONS

The lust for a smile, severe determination and complete lack of fear have been Poison's most redeeming quality these past three years. It took their debut album, 'Look What The Cat Dragged In,' from nowhere to four million copies sold. As for their most recent LP, 'Open Up And Say...Ahh!', at the moment it's past the quintuple million mark, and still selling strong.

"I'm always trying so hard to make everybody like me," Bret confesses to his overwhelming approach to life. *"When I was little, I wanted to be involved in everything. If someone was having a birthday party up the street, and I couldn't go to that party I'd start crying until I got to go. And once I got there I'd be the life of the party. When I tried out for football in eighth and ninth grade, I was way the smallest kid on the team, but I was so determined to be successful I tried twice as hard. So both years I went out I was starting quarterback. It wasn't that I was that good, although I was very fast, it's just that I was so determined that I did it.*

"This is still true today. There's a lot of guys that have a better voice, and better looks, but I've tried just as hard if not harder than they did, and it's gotten me above where they're at. Maybe I work harder with my voice and work harder with my look. That's what the whole band's like."

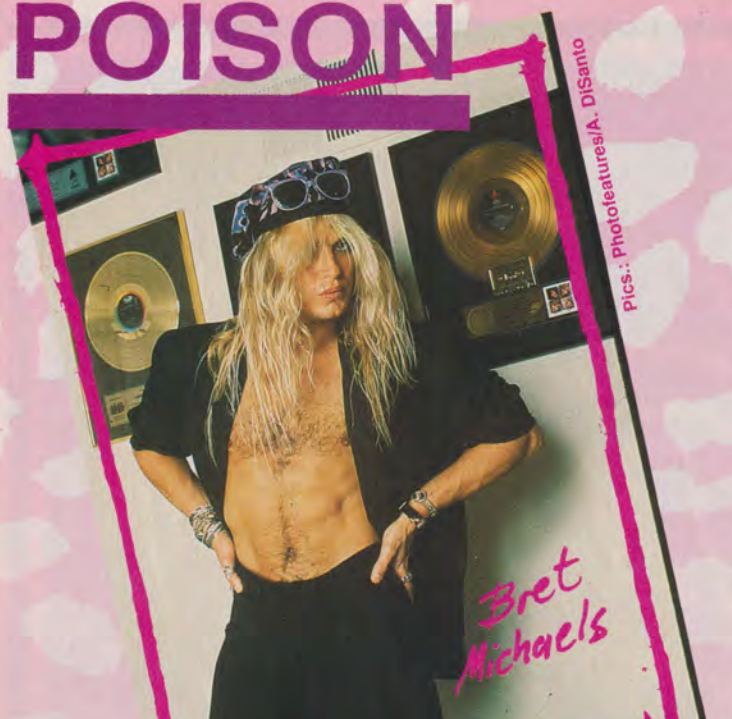
COMMENCING CHAOS

In a big budget weekend just after Poison's triumphant Country Club show, their record company, Enigma, reached into their meagre independent label pocketbook and hired video producer Jean Pellerin to create videos for the company's two most promising bands, Poison and Stryper. Poison, in the ultimate Party atmosphere recorded 'Talk Dirty To Me.' MTV liked it, girls across the country took to Poison the way they had taken to glam hags Boy George and Michael Jackson years before. Radio picked up on it. Poison were happening. Ratt invited them out on tour. Poison went platinum. In what had the potential to be one of the best parties of the year, Poison threw a platinum celebration on the British luxury cruise ship the Queen Mary. Ratt, Motley Crue, Great White, Dokken; members of L.A.'s big bands of the moment were all there. Musicians of the recently signed quintet of Guns N' Roses were deliberately left ashore.

But platinum was only the beginning.

"When we went out on the road, the crowd responded," enthused Bret. *"You know why that is? We don't sing at our audience, we sing with them. A lot of bands talk at the crowd, they say, 'Hey mother fucker you're going to have a great time tonight.' With Poison it's like 'Everyone looks great tonight and we're going to have a great time.' "I get the audience involved. Like during the set I bring out a pair of binoculars and I'll look at the very back row and I'll point out people I can see and I'll say, 'You with the yellow tie on...how are you liking the show?' Or I'll dedicate a song to 'everyone who's in the bathroom while I'm up here wasting my energy.' People love it. You've just got to have a bit of humour and a bit of seriousness and mix the two together...and you've got to have*

POISON



Pics.: Photofeatures/A. DiSanto

FROM GLAM RAGS TO RICHES!

fun.'

DETRACTORS

A popular bone of contention is Poison's ongoing battles with Guns N' Roses. It began when C.C. blabbed that Slash had tried out for the group in 1985 when they were looking to replace original guitarist Matt Smith. C.C. was enlisted instead, but that event has caused a longstanding hostility between the two bands, which culminated when Bobby and Bret dumped a bucket of ice over publicist Bryn Bridenthal's head backstage at a concert. Subsequently another lawsuit was filed against Poison, suing Poison for punitive damages due to public humiliation. Poison claimed they did nothing wrong. But as stated above, Poison have a rather singular view of the universe with themselves at the centre.

Want spoken proof? When we asked Rikki who he thought had the biggest impact in rock during the '80s, he responded, *"I think we have. I really do. I met this guy at a record store one day and he said, 'You know, at the beginning people said Poison is an image band and blah, blah, blah. But nobody shook the rock world like you guys did, you blew everybody away. For one reason or another they thought this was going to be a joke band and then you turn around and headline.' So I definitely believe we've had the most impact."*

Although we do get the occasional fan complaint about Poison from those who waited hours to meet them and then were ignored or told to go away, by and large most mail on Poison comes from girls who want to be Mrs. Bret Michael. Those robust little bodies, the songs of casual eroticism, and Bret's winning personality have truly flabbergasted the youth of the nation.

TOUR TWO

On stage night at the country club in May 1986, Bret could be heard rapping about how Poison's love is to play good time rock 'the way Van Halen used to.'

"You know C.C. called Eddie Van Halen the other day," Bret revealed in a once upon a time conversation. *"If I talked to Dave it would be like. Oh my god! The world's going to end! I'm still a huge fan."*

The date is 23rd April, 1988, the location, Worcester, Massachusetts. Poison, sans lipstick and hairspray, is opening for David Lee Roth. Bret, who has all the lusty sex appeal Roth had a decade ago, is tickled.

"Being on tour with Roth is great. You know David Lee Roth has always been a hero to me," he exclaims. *"I'm almost scared to get too close to Roth...you don't necessarily want to know too much, or it might shatter the image. Things are better as a poster sometimes."* LA Bret pauses weighing the connotation of his words. *"Don't get us wrong,"* he adds so nothing is misconstrued. *"Roth's treated us great, we've got lots of room on stage. Of course you don't get a lot of time, and you don't get a lot of sound, but that's how it is with an opening act."*

You get the impression that Bret feels maybe he should add a Mr. in front of the Roth.

The David Lee Roth/Poison tour lasted six months. While Poison were off touting their most recent success 'Open Up And Say...Ahh!' David Lee Roth was out in support of 'Skyscraper,' an album that was not drawing nearly the same amount of media attention. The story goes, that Roth, jealous of Poison's success and their female appeal, was extremely stringent about doling out backstage Poison passes. By doing this he duped himself into being the centre of attention, although in the natural course of things he was not. Girls had no interest, guys said it wasn't the same as Van Halen. By the end of their tour, the larger part of the audience was there for Poison, great masses of them leaving during Roth's rather entertaining set.

THE TOP

It was September 16, 1989 when Poison, accompanied by Britny Fox and Lita Ford, did their first headlining arena date in Green Bay, Wisconsin. They were hot. Others were not. Acts from both major tours that Poison opened for in the States have futures that look extremely questionable. Thus, if anybody should have a grasp of how ephemeral success is, it should be Poison. Still, this is their performance at centre stage, and the desire to put life in perspective is occasionally overlapped by the glare of the spotlights. Poison has had many valuable lessons. Have they been taken in? Rikki elaborates...

"When we were an opening act we learned many things. We've seen how popularity can dissipate. When discussing groups we've toured with, I find it really hard to talk without sounding down on somebody else, but let me be frank and say we've learned to avoid a lot of the pitfalls we've seen other bands suffer."

What kind of pitfalls?

"Not really being in touch with the fans anymore. When the communication is not there you can tell, and we've learned that obviously you can't come off tour and go hide like Elvis in this day and age. You've got to be in touch and listen to what people say and what's going on. You must be sensitive to what everyone wants to see and hear. I believe we're managing to do that. We're always changing the set around, either visually or musically to accommodate the audience's desires. You've got to keep changing. Music is a growing process, not stagnation."

You've now been headlining for seven months, how has your show been evolving?

"It's hard to describe, there are just little things in between songs, the way Bret does his raps, the way the whole show is presented that gradually evolves. You make a mistake, but it sounds right, so you practice it because it really came off well. I remember one night, Bret didn't get back to the mike in time on 'Every Rose Has Its Thorn,' and so we deliberately made it longer from that night on, because it sounds neat, it lets the song flow live. That's what's cool about being on the road for so long, you accidentally discover things and you get better whether you want to or not, just because you're playing together every night."

How has being on the road for almost a year-and-a-half affected your musicianship?

"Being on the road a week is equal to a month in the clubs. And a week of headlining is worth two months. Why? There's a lot more pressure, pressure to be perfect every night. It's a lot more kicked back in a club. When you're headlining an arena, you can't have an off night, you have to deliver. No matter what happens, the show must go on -- you've got your one shot to do it in each town -- there's not second chance."

"But we've always thrived on adversity. The more pressure we have the better we perform."

How have you evolved as a person and a musician through everything you've experienced during your tour?

"Me personally? I'll give you an example. I used to hate playing to a click track in the studio, I felt like it was just holding me back. People would say the click track should be

Pic.: Photofeatures/J. Conrad

your friend, and I'd say, 'Yeah right,' as I threw it through the window. I felt so locked into it. Touring has helped me with that because it's pressure again. You can't mess up, you have to do it right. Now I play 75 percent of the set with a click, and it doesn't hamper me at all. Playing an hour and a half show is an incredible learning experience. Before, when you were doing forty minutes you'd come out and want to get everyone's arms in the air for that set. Boom! Boom! straight to the end. When you have a long set you want to shift the crowd a little bit, you go into 'I Won't Forget You,' and 'Every Rose Has Its Thorn,' then you change the mood with 'Good Love' which is a little funkier, and get the back up again, with 'Look But You Can Touch.' It's a whole other thing to try and control the audience, it's something that's completely different. And to do it in front of 10,000 is a hell of a lot different than doing it in front of 300 in a club."

THE LAST FRONTIER

Headlining tours of the United States, Japan and Australia have all been a success for Poison. The last frontier is Europe, the continent where they have been sharply derided and ridiculed by the press and rock public,(except in MH U.K. which has consistently lauded their efforts). But it's been said of Poison, *"You never quite know where Poison are flouting their stilettoes: on their heels or their hands...;*

"We're not very well liked in Europe right now," Rikki comments candidly. *"There's a lot of resentment in the press, but the press is so weird. They'll write all these articles saying only the music matters, but then if they don't get their passes on time they write a bad article, whereas if they got their passes early they would have written a good article. It matters how much you stroke them. I treat everybody the same. I'll give them the same chance they gave me, but some people really want their asses kissed and I won't do it. I think it's wrong. I want them to judge our band on our band, not on whether I gave them a shot of Jack before the show or not. That's what a lot of them want, they want to be stroked. I guess that's part of the business, but it's part of the business I don't enjoy doing so I don't do it. I only expect people to do it to me,"* he laughs.

"Fortunately despite what they like we have a lot of fans. We went to eight in the singles charts which is really difficult. Number one, Europe is not that hell bent on American bands, and secondly they're certainly not that hell bent on rock and roll right now. So to get to number eight on the charts is really quite an accomplishment.

"I don't know why they don't like us over there, they just have a hair up their ass for some reason. Eventually we'll conquer."

NEXT

By the time this hits press, Poison's world onslaught for 'Open Up And Say...Ahh' will be in its final stage. Europe has been put on hold as an accomplishment to be heralded some time in the future. For now, after two years of effort on 'Open Up And Say...Ahh!', relaxation is looming. Bobby is looking forward to playing with his fluorescent green telephone, C.C. has a new sister-in-law to become acquainted with, and all of them have Harleys that are sorely in need of some exercise...

"After this tour is over I'm going to party in ways that we haven't been able to on the road," Rikki relates.

"I'm going to make some art work, skateboard, ride, fun stuff like that. I'm not into blowing my money on thousands of dollars worth of drugs. I don't do that kind of partying. I can't wait to go out and ride with my friends on motorcycles, that's really what I'm looking forward to, riding my Harley."

Where do you go when you ride?

"Everywhere. I go club hopping, up the Pacific Coast Highway, San Diego, Santa Barbara, go on street rod runs, I just cruise everywhere. I really like people that are into motorcycles and cars. I relate to them easy, probably because I grew up with a lot of motorheads."

What else will you do with your free time?

"I've thought about looking for a house, but that's not the main thing I'm thinking about. I'll probably fly my parents out to Los Angeles. I'm thinking about trying to get them a place out here. I paid their house in Pennsylvania off, now maybe they'll sell it and I'll move them out here.Also, there is some travelling I'd like to do when we come off tour. That's all I do is travel but, there's a lot of places I'd like to see that I haven't seen on tour. We don't really get the chance to play Hawaii. I like the water sports there.

I like adventure things, so I'd like to get involved in some adventure when I get off tour. The road is such a rush, playing every night is so cool, you have to work hard to equal that off tour. So, I'd like to go to Africa.

I have a relative of mine, a second cousin, who ran a monastery in Kenya. She passed away a couple of years back, but she still has family there. It gives me a good reason to go. Plus I could sample some real tribal drums, go on a safari, just try to survive there, see what it's like, see if I can take it. Also, I collect African art, so it would be fun to get some stuff right from there and bring it back. The only thing that scares me about Africa is all the political problems, I'm afraid I'll get bombed or something on the way over."

After this tour is over how much time will you take off before commence working again?

"Just a couple months. We've already been writing some songs for the new record. Bret and I put a four-track recorder on the bus, and we've been recording stuff while we've been on tour. We have nothing concrete yet, just little parts of songs, stuff like that. It will give us plenty of reference material when it comes time to put it the next album together. It should make it much easier to create. We like to write when it's more casual, when we're not really forced to do it, and on the bus we'll just play. We'll come up with a riff, or a beat and say, 'Okay, that's a great ideal, let's have fun with it.' And we tape it. So, the creative half of the work's already done, all that's left is the technical part.

It's much easier this way. When I create I have to be in the mood, I have to be loose enough, but I have to be in a separate mood in order to make the technical part of it happen. Those moods very rarely happen and exactly the same time. So once we've got all these ideas down on tape, all we have to gear ourselves for is the arrangements, which we'll work on that at a later time."

When do you expect to start seriously working on the next album?

"In November we'll start rehearsing and then in January or so we'll go back into the studio."

Will you work with Tom Werman again?

"I don't know it's too far off. Like us, you're just going to have to wait and see."

JODI SUMMERS

DIARY OF A MADMAN...

THE BRITISH STEEL TOUR

The journey of a thousand miles, say the sages of the East, begins with a single step. It also ends with a single stagger... It started out as a sort of semi-reasonable idea - to take the new Metal Hammer Best Of British Steel album out on the road to the rock clubs of the U.K. And so it was, that a tour was begun with our own Claire Britt at the controls, and a plan of action devised. First stop was the Astoria in London, and the last was The Roxy in Sheffield. In between lies a tale of mayhem, madness, lunacy, and lots and lots of manic dashing from city to city. What follows is a brief guide to seriously damaging the inside of your cranium, not for the faint hearted...the MH British Steel Tour diary *(written up in secret in the back of various venues)* was rescued from the walking wreckage that was all that remained of the crew who braved the frozen north to bring the Best Of British to the far flung outposts of the galaxy...

DAY 1
ASTORIA THEATRE, LONDON

There is something quite odd about the Astoria. It has a strange atmosphere about it that has nothing to do with rock, and a great deal to do with posing around in what passes for the latest fashion. So, to a massed mob of ripped jeans, grubby unwashed faces, and a whole crop of nipple and nose rings, we began what was to turn out to be the most serious brain damage you can self inflict since the invention of the bullwhip...

For those who haven't seen the inside of the edifice known as the Astoria, a brief description. The place is a huge old theatre, with a large main auditorium, stage and lighting system, and a bar upstairs where you simply aren't a human being unless you are a state registered ligger with at least ten years experience of tearing chunks out of your Levis. The sounds are LOUD and the crowds sway back and forth from the stage to the bar and back again: a flowing tide of semi punk, semi metal nutbangers, intent on having the rocking time of their lives...and being SEEN having it too. The Metal Hammer/FM Revolver stand set up in the catacomb of tunnels that leads from the front door to the main hall, manned *(or should that be Womanned?)* by Claire and the crew from FM Revolver, we waited with baited breath for Death Trash to take the stage. Now these guys have some serious stage antics, including the sort of public activities that usually result in the perpetrators residing for quite some time in a strait-jacket. They thrash, they smash, they leap around and generally give the moshing mass a good deal for their money. Death Trash are an enigma - their tracks start together, run together, then, like some strange railway train, loses all its carriages in different directions just when you think they can't possibly sustain that level of zonko metal any further. They end their songs *(and the entire performance)* in chaos. Long may they run. It has taken Death Trash simply MONTHS to reach their current level of playing - it's just a pity they had to do their learning in public.

Next bout of entertainment is me. I'm there as the 'Technical Bod' of Metal Hammer, and since I know you can't play CDs on a turntable, or cassettes in a CD player - I'm also the house presenter. So it was that I took control, to showcase the new LP to the hungry anticipation of the crowd. My half hour stint over, it was time for Midnight Blue to take the stage. Tight, somewhat sophisticated, the band provide a great stage show, subtle lyrics and music, and a degree of style that left the Astoria looking well shoddy. I like Midnight Blue - and their contribution to the LP *(the track Surrender)* is, for me, a big high point. It's just a pity the strange London crowd here won't stop ligging and listen...

The Astoria shuts in the early hours of the morning when, at the first light of dawn, the detritus of another night of sleaze metal are ejected onto Charing Cross Road. I discover that daylight isn't always quite what it's cracked up to be. Bed...with the knees of my jeans still intact.

DAY 2.
GLOUCESTER GUILDHALL

The Gloucester Guildhall Arts Centre concert featuring December Rose, Wreckage, Wild Pussy and Wrathchild is also Day 2 of the British Steel tour. Paul Phillips *(Man Friday to the MH London office)* is manning the stand, and has to deal with the wilder elements of both the English and Welsh contingents who turn up. These are two definite camps...the Celts being there to cheer on their heroes Wild Pussy, while the Engish stand and watch in sheer disbelief as they go f***ing crazy when the band takes the stage. The Welsh know how to go berserk, in fact they are starting a Degree course on that subject at New Tredegar University. The first students of that course were at Gloucester... Wrathchild took the stage at 11.00 and, aided and abetted by a mass of pyrotechnics and Rocky's frantic stage antics, they pull through a set of mega proportions, ending with not one, but TWO renditions of Nukklear Rokket *(the guitar broke down at the end of the first...)* I emerge from the venue with sweat burns to both feet, and a head that feels like someone stuffed it with wire wool somewhere along the line...

DAY 3.
NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY

A long Friday haul up the M1 *(at an average speed of 22.5 MPH)* brings us *(that is, me, Dot Matrix the Hammer's own crossword compiler, and Claire)*, to Nottingham - home of Rock City. A short introductory speech by Roger *(local thrasher, nice geezer and all round Nuttingham rocker)*, explains the excesses of this major nightclub. He isn't wrong either. The place starts out fairly quiet, and then, within a few minutes, the influx of 2,000 crazed, depraved rockers transforms the place into a cavern of metal madness.

I like Rock City. It has an element of greatness about it. It is a great night out for anyone seriously into wearing G N'R tee shirts, drinking 10 pints of freezing beer, then spending five hours on the dancefloor getting your heads down. LOVELY. When we finally took the stage, late, the mob before us looked like refugees from Armageddon. The temperature was soaring, and poor Claire had to take a whole seven verses of 'Get Your T*ts Out For The Lads' from the assembled males. As she put it later 'Now I know just how Lisa Dominique feels...' as for the fans...well, they gathered at the MH stand in droves, grabbing at the free copies we had brought, and scrabbling for autographs from us, and the bands who turned up for the album promotion. *(Special mention here for Acid Reign, who turned the promotion on it's head by firstly hiding all the prizes, then pelting the resident DJ with eggs. Thanx Kev - but next time WARN US FIRST!)* Nottingham *(should be written Nutting'em, honest)* ended with a mad dash for the car, and a rapid escape from the tearing army that emerges from the club in the early hours. Final Result: Metal Hammer 4, Rock City 2,000. Britt at third leg, Matrix caught out *(asleep actually)*. Oakes not out. *(But it was close...)*

DAY 4.
NEWCASTLE MAYFAIR

From the sublime to the beautiful. Newcastle Mayfair Club is a neat and attractive disco which, on a Saturday night, opens the doors to the Geordie Army of rock hierarchy. This consists of a solid line of north eastern geezers and ladies, dressed in their metal finery, and intent on one thing: having a great rock night. And they do. The place fills up even faster than Rock City, and soon we have exhausted the free copies, and are down to handing out bits of Mark Days old socks and Chris Welch's rock trivia - both of which are in high demand. I take the stage at 11.30 - there to begin the Slash Contest. Now, this may take some believing if you weren't there...

The Slash Contest is quite simple really: it starts with the Build Your Own Slash Kit. This consists of a battered top hat, a mop of curly hair *(cut from guitar leads)*, a giant cigarette, a bottle of Jack Daniels, and a 24 inch cod piece. The idea is, to get the wig and the hat on the head, the cod piece down the pants, and the fag and the bottle in the mouth. John, resident DJ at the club, was somewhat worried at what would happen...but in the event, the contest proved to be lunacy incarnate. Not just the blokes who put their heads on the block and took up the challenge *(one of whom got the whole operation down to just eight seconds!)*, but also the girls who came up on stage too - though how they reacted to trying to get two feet of pseudo prick down a body belt masquerading as a dress I leave to your fertile imaginations...

One aspect of Newcastle which I really can't fail to mention is the city centre itself. This consists of a block of streets, all of which are one way, *(the wrong way)*, all of which have bus lanes *(in the lane you want to be in)* and are inhabited by suicidal trendies in yellow sweaters who are the epitome of the term 'casual'. So casual in fact that they can't be bothered with things like cars speeding at them... I'm surprised any of them survive a weekend at all. Not so the dynamic crowd at the Mayfair. manic, fun, and willing to even humour chronically insane members of the Metal Hammer staff, they seriously enjoy a good time: I'll be back, you Geordie Gooks, so get ready for the James Hetfield aerobics club...

DAY 5.
SHEFFIELD, THE ROXY

From the land of stottie cake and Newkie Brown to the true home of British Steel - Sheffield. A huge city set in the drab Yorkshire landscape, the planners at least have spent a few milliseconds on the road layouts, which means we can get the car to the venue in short order. *(Though they grab a fiver off you for the privilege...)* The Roxy is a big club, with a mega lighting rig which not only flashes and gyrates nicely, but also does gymnastics too. Resident DJ Colin Slade *(who also does the rock show on Radio Hallam)* is the host - and kindly allows us to take over 45 minutes of his crowd. This is a more sedate crowd *(Monday night isn't perhaps the wildest anywhere)* - but they still manage a full house, and they fill and empty the dancefloor in direct proportion to the popularity of the tracks playing. So, G N'R pack the stage area with heaving and sweating bodies...and anything out of the mainstream means you see a lot of floorboards. Ho hum. Regardless, we stroll out to do the biz on the stage and, surprise surprise, the Slash Contest has them in stitches. *(Somewhat reluctant to take the stage, certain 'volunteers' from the crowd were actually press ganged into appearing. I will return the collars and bits of hair later, honest!)* And so it was that they DID dance to Sabbat, they DID play the Slash Game with a verve and style that had the rest of the Hammer crew breathless, and they DID break that eight second barrier - contrary to the philistines who said that the Sheffield crowds weren't the sort of folk to enter into the spirit of things...they didn't just enter it, they went in and BLITZED it!

And so we rounded off the end of the *(now legendary)* British Steel Tour with a crazed attack on the bar..and the serious imbibing of vast quantities of...lemonade? Well, a few minutes later, the rail strike forced us to embark on a late night dash to London, and we don't drink and drive!

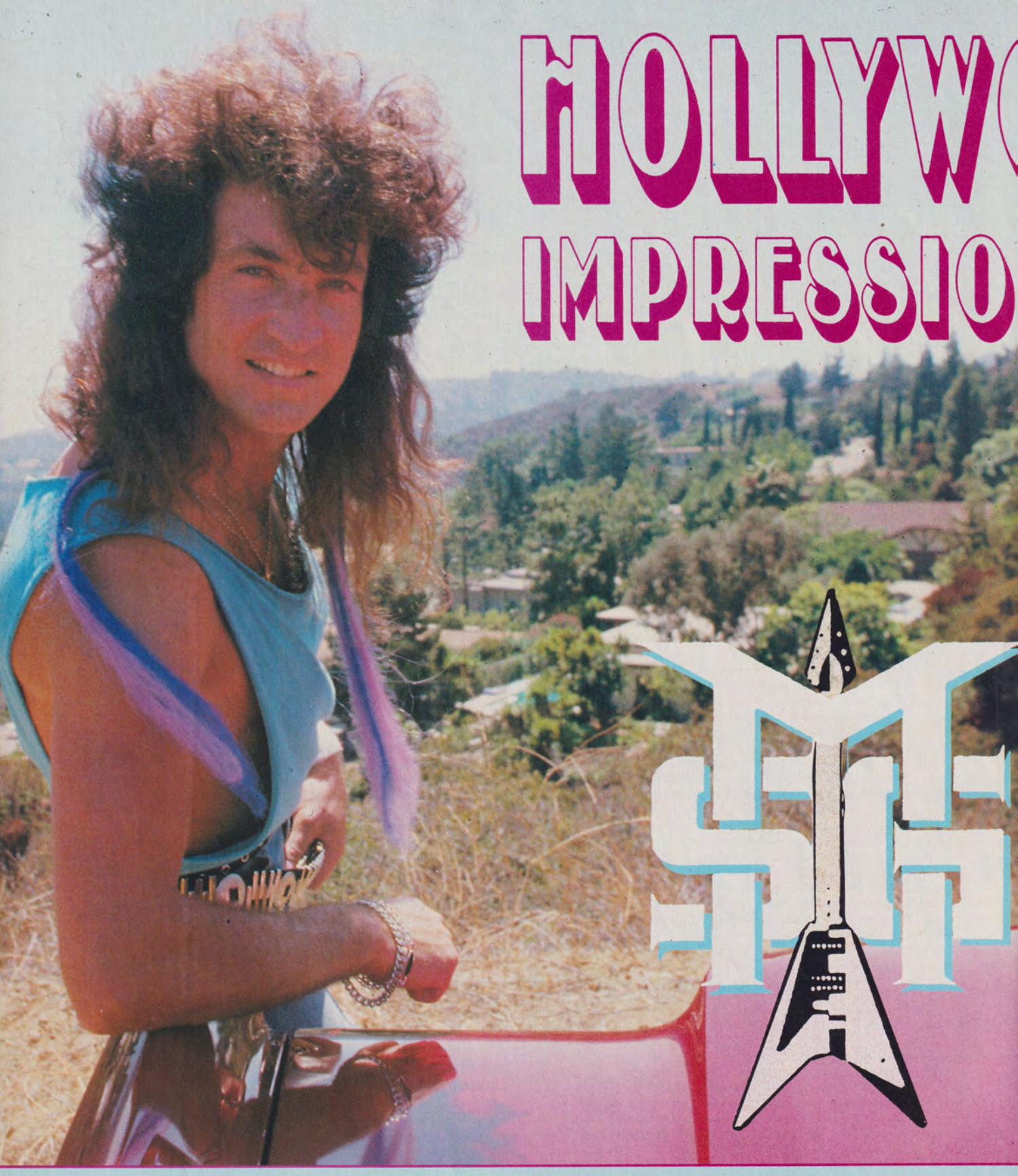
THE VERDICT.

Contrary to popular belief, the U.K. isn't full of rock clubs, bursting at the seams. Instead, there are pockets of massive resistance to the pop influx - a national *(and serious)* backlash against the Kylie Donovan Schools Of Pop Pap. This is down to two main factors. Firstly, the weight of local demand for a rock venue in which the rites of metal can be carried out, and, secondly, enlightened club managers who are wiling to risk their neat decor and carpets to the slings and arrows of outrageous metalheads. This combination, in Sheffield, Nottingham, London and Newcastle have provided great clubs *(on a regular basis)* where fans can meet, drink, and make merry to their favourite sounds. Not many people get the chance to travel around and compare this type of venue - but Claire engineered not only a tour of the rock nights out in the far north, but also a unique insight into the strength that the rock movement has out in the U.K. Long may you mosh, O Children of Steel. We will return.

TIM OAKES

Special thanks to; Clare Britt for organising the tour, getting us in order, and then leading us like a metallic Joan Of Arc from gig to gig; Dot Matrix for handing out 5,000 raffle tickets, driving all over, and being an island of sanity in several oceans of nuttiness; the staff and managers of each of the venues: FM Revolver; Fuzzy The Trusty Cortina: and finally, to the gentlemen of Northamptonshire Constabulary (Motorway Police Department) *with whom we had an interesting chat on the M1 at 2.30am...*

HOLLYWO
IMPRESSIO



The beautiful woman strode into the small restaurant in west Hollywood, and for a second everything was quiet. Mick Treadwell looked, Helmut Rucker looked, Edgar Klusener looked and Robin McAuley looked. She had skin the colour of milky coffee, thick black hair...

"Where were we?", Robin broke the silence, but he couldn't look away from the young lady who was standing by the doorway with a bunch of friends. ... I hope she sits down next to us..." And that's what happened. She sat down in front of, seemingly oblivious to the reaction she had caused. "Hmm the new record. Well then... God, she is soooo gorgeous."

Edgar Klüsener

The record?

"Oh yes, the record. Let's get back to the record. We ... (he looked over to the neighbouring table) ... What did I want to say again? Oh yes, the album. Well, I'm recording the leads at the moment, so things are going really well."

The album. Frank Filipetti, who used to produce bands like Foreigner and Survivor was also responsible for producing this LP, and is currently working with Michael, Robin and the others in the Track Records studios in LA. Kiss, by the way, are working on their next mega seller in the studios next door.

Mitch Perry has left the band again - he's the axe and keyboard wizard responsible for playing some of MSG's impressive solos. Steve

...OD ...NS

Pic.: Gene Ambo

Pic.: George Chin

Mann has taken his place - he used to be keyboard player and guitarist with the band so he knows what he's letting himself in for. "Steve is a great keyboard player, a great guitarist, a great song writer and a great engineer."

So it's Steve The Great, who also played quite a major role in producing the follow-up of the 'Perfect Timing' LP.

"Steve has a 16-track demo studio at his London home. He brought some of his recording equipment over to Hannover with him, and stored it in a small 16-track studio. That's where we recorded the demos and Steve worked as a recording engineer."

The guys managed to get quite a bit of material together, about thirty songs all in all. Only about ten of these will be released on the finished LP, amongst them tracks like 'Shadow Of The Night', 'What We Need', 'Any Time', 'Vicious', 'This Is My Heart', 'Never Ending Nightmares', 'Checkold Destiny', 'Take Me Back', 'Get Down To Business' or Bad Boys'.

Michael Schenker and Robin wrote one of the songs together in LA, the track 'This Is My Heart'. " ...a fantastic acoustic ballad, with guitars and vocals only, a song we all really like, and everyone who's heard it has felt the same way about it."

The band only needed ten days in total for the LPs pre-production, proof that everyone was well prepared when they flew to the city of fallen angels for the final recordings

STEP FORWARD

"As soon as we'd finished last years tour, it must have been around May 1988, we immediately started writing new material. Michael had lots of ideas, I had a few, but Bodo and Rocky had loads of ideas as well. In the end we had gathered about 30 song titles, and took our time choosing the best of them. Towards the end of June/beginning of July, Michael and I got together in Hannover, took a look at all the material and started recording first demos. That lasted until August. When we were finally ready to tackle the next step, Steve Mann came over and mixed the demos. In the end there were fourteen remaining tracks that we would have really liked to all include on the record, except we couldn't because of the well-known problems. It was a shame."

The new LP will apparently be better than 'Perfect Timing', less smooth and polished, typical MSG. And it will be a giant step forward. "We'll be jumping three or four LP's with this one. The keyboards are applied only marginally, but there are lots of rough guitars, hard, melodic, and soulful." According to Andy, 'Perfect Timing' included "quite a lot more guitars than could be heard later. The problem was that the guitars were played very much in line with the songs and were reduced to purely accompanying instruments, so that they were finally almost swallowed up. We weren't particularly happy with the way Andy produced us anyway. I mean a band like MSG just doesn't need five months to produce an album, which is what happened with 'Perfect Timing'. Five months are just too much. Andy has returned to his home town of LA on numerous occasions, and we started recording in Denmark, before moving onto Rudolf Schenker's studio in Hannover and then continuing to LA. Andy didn't particularly like Germany or Europe. It's not surprising that our relationship was quite difficult in the end."

Anyway the band were in LA for a couple of months and were just in the process of recording the lead vocals and the lead guitar. And they played a lot of tennis as well. Mick Treadwell, the band's tour manager was still sad that Michael Schenker had beat him, and was looking forward to getting his own back. Michael and Robin were otherwise working so hard, that they had absolutely no time for the nice little things that LA has to offer. None of the guys could go to the Cathouse or the Rainbow, or the various club concerts. But Robin McAuley didn't seem to mind too much. He seemed to be happier getting on with production and listening to Michael Schenker's guitar playing:

"Michael's guitar is much more dominant than on 'Perfect Timing'. Michael is an unbelievable guitarist, he's unique and no-one sounds quite like him, with that amazing feeling for melodies and harmonies! Michael plays from the bottom of his very heart, and that's what stands him apart from some of the fretboard w**kers around, who play their scales at a manic speed, who know all the technical tricks, but have as much soul as a stone rock. You can recognise Michael Schenker's guitar easily.. Michael is one of the few guitarists, apart from Moore maybe, who I personally admire and love and who have strong personalities in themselves. You could recognise Michael's guitar from a thousand others. It doesn't matter what he plays, he always plays a strong melody that really sticks in your mind for ages. It's sometimes really difficult for me as a singer to cope with the melodic way of playing the guitar. But that's a nice problem, I can imagine worse..."

TIGHT TEAM

Let's come back to this 'big leap forward' that Robin claims MSG have made. Tell us, what, where and how have MSG managed such a massive jump forward?

"Hmmm, it would be good if I could play you a little bit of what we recorded, that would answer your question. But okay, the answer is easy really: First of all the song writing. When we wrote the title for 'Perfect Timing' I'd only been in the band for three months and I hadn't adjusted to Michael particularly well. We're a really tight team now, and we get on really well. The new songs are so much better than anything we've ever done.. The arrangements are basically brilliant. We've also got some really fantastic hook lines, loads of heavy riffs, never-ending guitars and strong vocals. The guitars are also a lot rougher, more improvised, and not completely in line with the rest of the song, everything's more easy going,, not planned into the finest detail, less cramped. But I could tell you loads, you have to form your own opinion..."

Mr. McAuley seems to be really enthusiastic and at least he was honest enough to admit that the last LP wasn't that exciting. There must be some truth in what he says: So if he says the band have made a giant step forward, they probably have, especially as Robin McAuley is known for his self criticism. But we'll have to wait and listen.

Let's not talk about guitars any. What about lyrics dear Robin?

"Hahaha, they're all about incest! I love incest!", he looked over to the beautiful girl again...

"But seriously, I can't offer you any great political, religious or philosophical messages - I wouldn't want to anyway. That doesn't mean that I'm into writing banal lyrics. I sing about moods and try to describe atmospheres and put them into words. I like painting pictures with words, you could say that as well. That means that the listener has to force himself to interpret the song, and sometimes he'll interpret it in a way I didn't really meant to express. But I'm pleased with that, I like it when everyone makes their own decisions about what I sing."

Robin McAuley's lyrics are seldom corny, and they go further than usual superficial lyrics. "There are so many politicians and people who bombard mankind with various messages, opinions and statements every day, that I really didn't want to get involved in all that as well..."

He still does occasionally, even though that's a question of how you interpret what he sings about.

Lets return to Frank Filipetti and Steve Mann. The great Steve and Frank have discovered a really intensive method of working together, during which another sound engineer becomes completely superfluous, because Steve also has " ... a good timing, and will definitely have a really great future as a record producer and Frank was a good choice anyway because he's always open for everything and everyone else We had millions of big and small ideas, and he recorded all of them on his Walkman, listened to them intensely, played around with them a bit, re-arranged them slightly, even changing the tempo, and arrived at results that sounded fantastic and flowed into the latest production..."

And you can hear the result on the LP when it's released in October.

Whatever happens, and apart from tennis and pretty girls, guitars definitely seem to have played a driving force on the new album. It'll down to you to judge whether MSG have really leapt forward as far as they claim to have done.

WHEELING & DEALING!

Rod McSween of I.T.B.

Say the word 'music agent' and it conjures up a picture of a hard-bitten shark, talking on three phones and putting his motormouth on hold only to puff away at a large cigar, right? Wrong! The nearest thing to a piranha in Rod McSween's smart Soho office would be one of the tropical fish in his aquarium; Rod himself is polite and quiet and found time to give me a complete rundown on how an agent makes his living.

It's fair to say that Rod is one of the most powerful rock agents in London. His company, I.T.B., which he set up with Barry Dickins eleven years ago and which includes a promotion division as well as an agency, handles a complete spectrum of musical artists, but Rod specialises in representing a number of hard rock acts, which includes Bon Jovi, Def Leppard, Whitesnake and Ozzy Osbourne.

ADAGE

Rod has been working with many of his major acts for a long, long time - in fact, when Def Leppard signed their original agency agreement with him, Richard Allen was only fifteen and his father had to sign for him because he was still a minor! - and the long-standing relationships he has with his artists are of primary importance to him.

"What I enjoy most being an agent is having been involved in a project from day one and see an artist achieve incredible success and reach a fantastic level of popularity for which I've been an integral part of the process, particularly if I like the music and get on with the people involved in the organisation.

"I have an adage which is that any agent is only as powerful as the artist that he personally represents and personal representation is basically what the agency business is all about. I personally book every single date for for every act that I represent."

CONGESTION

So how does an agent go about booking a tour?

"My role normally starts around the fact that most tours are scheduled around album releases, because that's where the ultimate earnings are, especially in Europe. However, if, in a particular time period, there's a massive congestion of bands all touring at the same time, then we advise the manager who's touring, and when, and where, and what size buildings they're playing, how big the acts are and when their product is being released. The ideal situation is to know well ahead of time, so you can plan your tour and maybe deter other acts from touring in the same period.

"A basic theory is that the agent is responsible for all factors of the artist's live performances; that can go from just routing a tour and negotiating the deals to assisting with the logistics of the tour, especially with incoming American acts because they don't have those services over here. Because we also promote concerts, what we have at I.T.B. is a full-time production manager and he works closely with the agency, so an American manager can get advice on what sound and light systems to book for a tour, which trucking companies to use, the budgets that have to be set in order to determine whether a tour's going to make money or lose money. If it loses money, the act has to go to the record company and get tour support, which it will normally get if the record company feels that record sales are significantly going to increase.

"Once we've decided on the touring period, we have to look at how we're going to route the tour and which markets we're going to play first. Normally, we would either start or finish in the U.K., because of the geography of Europe and because most of the production starts or finishes in London. My normal way of routing it is to go Scandinavia, Germany, the Benelux countries, France, Spain, across to Italy, Switzerland and either move back to England through a couple of German dates or even play the Benelux countries at the end. You have to not just think of the band, because, often if you're dealing with a big act, the band might be flying everywhere. The most important thing that you have to think about is the production; you have to make available the best hall for the band's production and also, you've got to make sure that when you're routing the tour, it has to be possible for the trucks to make it.

"Once you've sorted out the routing, you have the basic structure of the tour, having slotted in the halls you think fit, according to their availabilities. The next job is to negotiate separately with the different promoters in each market the deal for the band. The basis of negotiation is the size of the building and the anticipated audience attendance and you ask the promoter to submit you with a breakdown of expenses for each hall. You also discuss with the promoter the optimum ticket price for the show. We also talk to the record companies and ask for their advice and input; if a record company is going to be supporting a tour, financially or promotionally, then it's important to make them feel a part of it.

DEALS

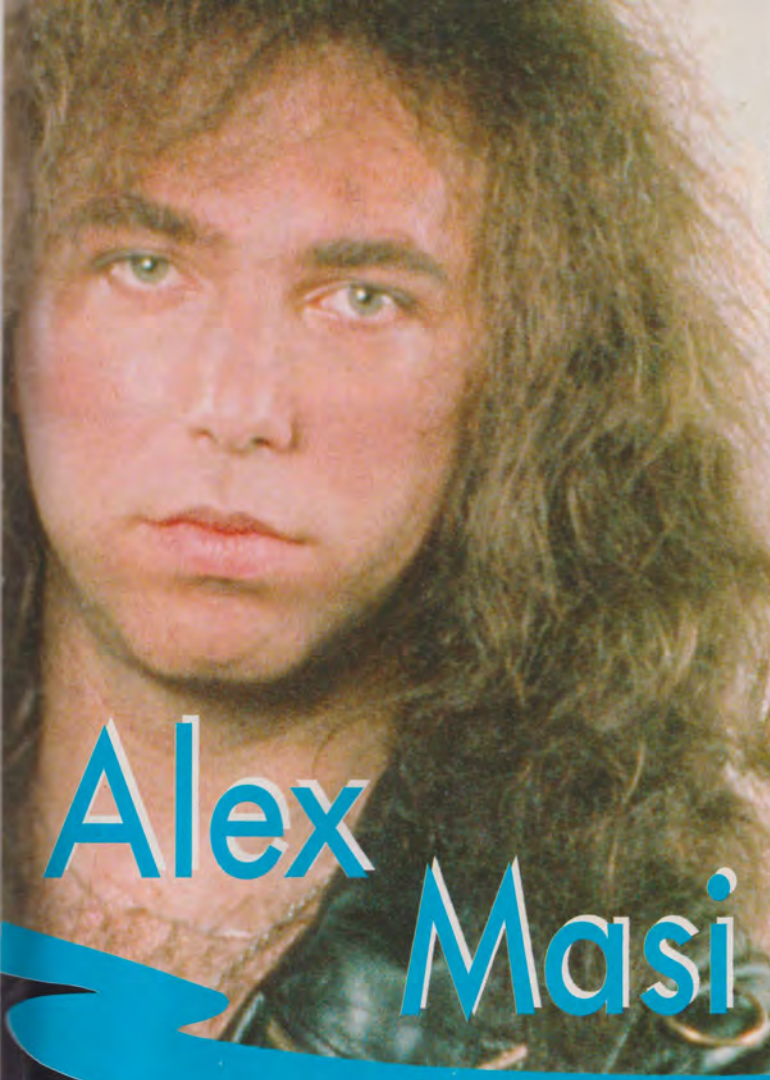
"When the deals are done, we have to look after the tax situation in each country and normally, I'll do that myself, although sometimes I might use the services of a lawyer or an accountant. Then it's time to take all the information back to the manager and be in a position where he can confirm the tour. On the confirmation, we announce the tour and monitor the artwork that the promoters use, the date that the tickets go on sale, any sponsorship that the promoters want to get involved with locally, nationally or internationally.

"As well as the stages of getting to confirm the tour, it's important that we choose the right opening act. If one of the acts that we represent is eminently suitable for the occasion then we will put them forward, but it doesn't have to be an in-house situation. Our priority is to have the strongest bill of any one of our artists to give the kids value for money, even if you know the show is going to sell out, because that eventually reflects on the act and any adverse factor reflecting on the act playing live eventually comes back to the agent.

"So it's quite a responsibility; it's not just a question of picking up a phone and saying to a promoter, 'Put up the posters and sell out the show'! It's a lot more complex than that."

VALERIE POTTER

LIFE STYLES



Alex Masi

BEWARE THE NEON SHARK

Hot new guitarist Alex Masi has caused quite a stir with his new solo album 'Attack Of The Neon Shark' recently released by Roadrunner. He recorded it with brilliant drummer Frankie Banali famed for his work with W.A.S.P and Quiet Riot. Among his special guests are guitarist's guitar hero Allan Holdsworth.

Alex comes originally from Venice, Italy, and he went to work in Los Angeles about two years ago. His own band, called Masi recorded two albums, 'Fire In The Rain'and 'Downtown Dreamers'. Here he proved his worth as a songwriter and guitar soloist.

Now he's had the chance to cut ten solid solo tracks, backed by Banali, that include 'Under Fire,''Attack Of The Neon Shark,'and 'Twilight Passion'. Alex plays all the guitar, keyboards and bass. Jeff Soto handles the vocal track 'Under Fire.' One of the cuts, 'Toccata'was featured by Keith Emerson in ELP some years back.

On some of the tracks Alex sounds, at times, like mid period Robert Fripp (circa 1972-78) and he replies,*''It's something that has been pointed out to me. But I think its more in terms of the sound rather than the approach. Musically the album is very diverse. I have tried to cover all the areas that I am particularly interested in. Working with Allan Holdsworth, gave me new insight into playing not only on the improvised type of scales, but also on putting direction into a free form type of music.''*

On working in the studio Alex says: *''I didn't write down any of the pieces, which allowed me to concentrate on keeping them fresh and alive throughout the process.''*

Didn't this cause problems with other musicians?

''There was only me and Frankie Banali! The rapport between us was incredible. I did all the bass and guitar parts alone and Frankie worked around me on the tracks I'd recorded. And he created some amazing percussion.:-

What does he think of the other members of the 'new guitar school?'

''I don't listen to them. Okay I hear them in passing. But they don't interest me. I spent so long on technique that it becomes very personal and I don't listen to them much because I am concentrating on what I can do.''

If this sounded rather sharp, Alex mellowed and explained

''Neon Shark isn't just a showcase, it's MY album man! It's like a window on my music. I tried to avoid the flashier tricks and play more directly. They are often only there to brighten things up, and don't help the flow.''

Rock fans may be surprised at the lighter edges and weirder elements in the music but Alex is an intriguing musician. Neon Shark can't be classed as the best of Alex Masi it's a sign post to the next album. I'm looking forwrd to it once he has sorted out his studio work. He doesn't work things out or write things down so that leads to confusion. That's the way it seems to listeners anyway.

Maybe Alex has a computerised brain. You need one to keep this sort of thing in order!

TIM OAKES

Claytown Troupe

Chris Riou, who probably has the widest grin in rock, and sings for the band who are now Island Records' fastest ever signing *(it took a week)* knocks all jibes firmly on the skull.

''We had a concept of how we saw the band progressing, building up slowly, and Island saw it exactly the same way. It was what they wanted for us and everyone was into it. Our A&R guy told us that if the boss wasn't interested we shouldn't bother with signing. Surely if a record company goes for something and offers a good deal then why not take it? Island had a lot to go on, a good video, relatively good gigs and the right image to go with the Claytown Troupe breed of music. It was all already there. Now we're on the inside (signed - not in Wormwood Scrubs) *we see a lot of bands and it takes months for them to be cultivated, to get them looking good, liking each other and all the rest of it. With us it was already sorted.''*

''It was really amusing watching all the other companies turn up to see us once the buzz had started,'' laughs drummer Andy.

''We'd already approached some before for a bit of advice and they all said Rock's Dead. Unless you're Guns n'Roses or Jesus Jones you don't fit in!'' remembers Chris.

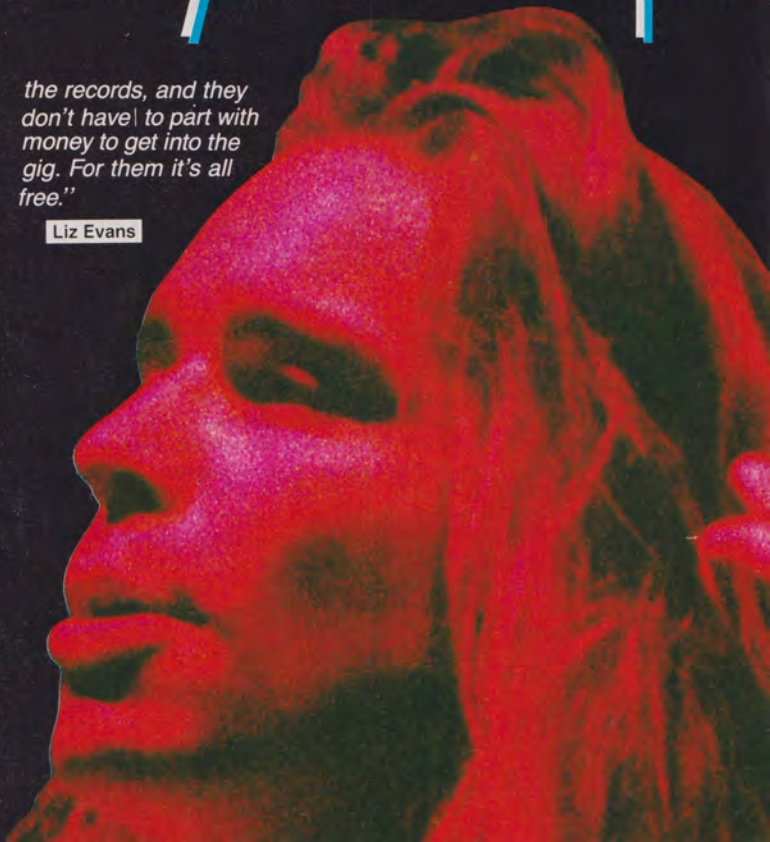
Chris who proves to be the band's mouthpiece in interviews as well as on stage, continues, *''There is this pressure on in the media to discover the next new band. No one discovered us before we went smack into the charts without any previous small label releases. We played the right sort of gigs, but record-wise we didn't release anything because there's no point in releasing something which would have cost £1000 and sounded like shit.''*

''Scenewise there isn't anything for British rock bands like us anymore. We're not goth or heavy metal or rock n'roll, we're a rock band. America has a similar situation, no one knows where to place the Soul Asylums of this world.''

''Being uncategorisable can hold bands back which is unfair,'' chips in Andy, *''I get annoyed with live reviews mentioning dry ice and black clothes. You might see one black T shirt on stage and a bit of smoke to make the lights more effective.''*

''Well,'' says Chris, *''the people who write that stuff don't listen to the records, and they don't have to part with money to get into the gig. For them it's all free.''*

Liz Evans



Vengeance

'A Merry Band Of Flying Dutchmen Who Haven't Quite Taken Off Yet.'

Vengeance are a new name to me and probably to you too if you're not German or Dutch and missed them headlining the Marquee on a Monday night a few weeks ago. I only stumbled across the band on their fourth album, 'Arabia', which is an interesting mixture of strong European heavy rock butting heads with the odd ballad and a majority of numbers that lyrically and musically plagiarise the big arena American rock format, pulling it off or not as the occasion demands. That is to say their efforts range from the rather crass 'The Best Gunfighter In Town' *(very bad Aerosmith)* to the sterling 'Wallbanger' *(good AC/DC)* to the rather confused 'Broadway-Hollywood-Beverly Hills' *(weird Van Halen)*. Vengeance have in fact been strutting the boards since '84 with the release of their self-titled debut which nobody talks about so neither will I. That was followed in '86 by 'We Have Ways To Make You Rock' and in '87 by the 'Take It Or Leave It' opus, which brings us nicely up to date with this year's 'Arabia'.

JOHN'S PARROT

Yet it is Vengeance's misfortune to hail from Holland which has less of a hard rock pedigree then my pet parrot, the list running, Golden Earring, Vandenberg, Full Stop, and the last one ain't a band. *(No Chris, I will not include Focus or Kyak!)*. So, it's easy to see why Dutch outfits don't exactly set the A&R heart string a fluttering with interest and maybe that has something to do with the rumour that their record company CBS/Epic in England have given the band less than brilliant promotion over here. Now whether that's a valid accusation or not I can't say but I had to get my musical manual *(bio)* from CBS Holland! Thereupon I gave guitarist Arjen Lucassen the pleasure of my company for forty minutes or so and spent the entire interview calling him Anthony at his suggestion. I happened to mention the lack of record company response but he wasn't surprised. In fact he said:

''I'm not surprised. It's a pity but the people in England haven't appeared to work very hard for the band as yet. I simply don't think they realise what a good critical reputation we have built up over the last four years or so. For example when we were in England for the tour we did an important interview with MTV/Metal Hammer and from there visited CBS/Epic where they treated us like a band that had just started out! They had this attitude, if you just keep working hard then maybe something will happen for you in the future! It's a pity because CBS/Epic in Holland and Germany are pulling their weight in Europe even though we are admittedly a much bigger band in those countries than in England. But then again it is CBS/Epic job to put down the promotional groundwork in your country for our music to capitalise on. I believe Vengeance could become very popular in England with the right back up. We have always received good album reviews and on our first tour we collected good live reviews as well.''

Taking into account the unhealthy state of hard rock back in Holland, Vengeance haven't exactly been having an easy time of it at home.

''Yes, there is a lot of prejudice against hard rock and against Dutch bands in Holland. Let me give you an example. A couple of weeks ago we did a

festival, Parkpop, in Den Haag. There were about twelve bands on the bill playing a variety of rock from Little Steven to Living Colour, in front of around 300,000 people. It should have been a great moment for Vengeance but local media coverage concentrated on the other bands! I know it's hard to believe but it's true. They also refuse to play our stuff on the radio but then again they don't like playing most hard rock on the radio except for bands like Guns N' Roses who they can't ignore because they are so popular. And the worst thing about it is no-one seems to understand why, so there is no way to get to the root of the problem. Usually Holland is a very patriotic country, when the Dutch football team plays everyone is as supportive as hell, but when it comes to music, to supporting home grown talent, there is nothing. Obviously radio coverage is the thing that would help but, naming no names, it's really run by a couple of major DJ's who have decided that they don't like hard rock because it's safer and easier for them to stick with established AOR acts that they know they can play and no-one will complain about. They haven't got the guts to help Dutch bands."

APATHY

Such local apathy must surely have affected the way Vengeance have developed their own sound. I mean even album titles such as 'We Have Ways To make You Rock' and 'Take It Or Leave It' hint as much.

"Yes, you might be right, I hadn't thought of it like that before. Maybe if the band had had earlier chart success with some of our singles who knows what might have happened? It could have developed the confidence we have now at a much earlier stage. Because 'Take It Or Leave It' was a desperate album. We so wanted to have a successful single that we tried to fill it with potential hits and went over the top sticking in lots of silly effects like violins, trumpets, talk boxes. In many ways 'Arabia' is the backlash of that because when it didn't happen we decided to go completely the other way, not to make a commercial album but a heavy, uncompromising one, to please no-one but ourselves. Consequently there are no singles on 'Arabia' and hardly any effects. We tried to produce an album that reflected the band in a live situation. 'Arabia' is therefore the most honest record that Vengeance has ever released. Put it this way we are a rock and roll band that has done the ten singles on an album and now we just want to make the best music that we can, to be ourselves."

Well you say that but tracks like 'Broadway-Hollywood-Beverly Hills', 'The Best Gunfighter In Town' and 'Wallbanger' all seem to be aping the American sound, musically and lyrically attempting to infiltrate Van Halen/Aerosmith/AC/DC territory.

"It's funny but we only get accused of that in England. In Europe we never get that sort of question at all. I mean it's true to say that I am influenced by a band like Van Halen, for me they were the best of their era, but Vengeance is not a copy band. Take a song like 'Arabia', that's in a very different style, and I think it just comes down to a question of styles rather than nationalities. I have lots of ideas and I'm not going to confine myself to just one particular way of writing because then all the material would sound the same. I happen to think that the most important thing about Vengeance is the variety of sounds and moods we can offer. We have lighthearted numbers, we have fast uptempo rockers, we have slower ballads, and we have serious songs like 'Cry Of The Sirens' and 'Arabia'. In fact I don't believe we sound American at all. When I think of American music I always imagine lots of keyboards, lots of harmony vocals, laid back chords and pretty melodies."

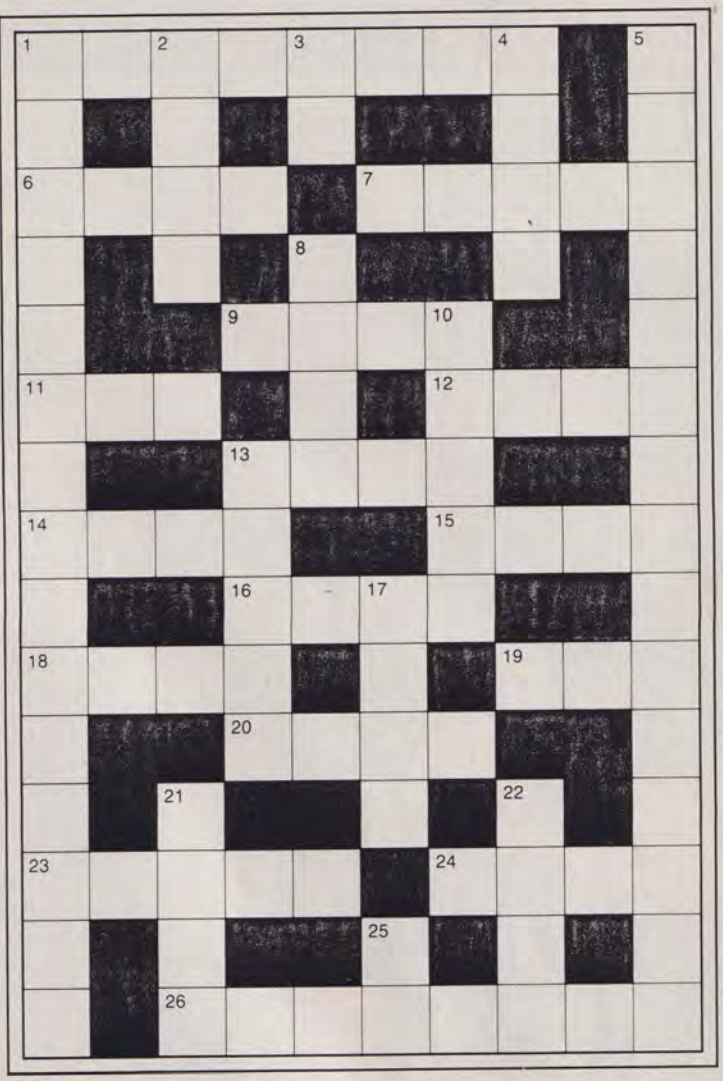
HOMAGE

"You mentioned the lyrics but 'Broadway-Hollywood-Beverly Hills' was originally going to be entitled 'Baby Your Mine' and was about someone being in love with a film star. The only reason it ended up with the new title is because all the big film studios are located in Broadway, Hollywood and Beverly Hills! I'm not paying homage to them just because they are American! To be honest I wouldn't place a lot of emphasis on the lyrics to any of our songs because they aren't that important. They have to fit the rhythms of the number, but that's it."

Well whatever Arjen/Anthony says it's a fact that to really make it Vengeance have to crack The States or even England in order to arouse American interest in the first place. And they haven't and I reckon the reason could be that, outside of Europe, they are seen as very much American soundalikes and it's this lack of a musical identity that will always hold them back. No-one wants a substitute for the real thing, no matter how proficient it is.

"I suppose that might be a possibility. It is true that in many cases for many people it always comes down to a question of classification. In fact sometimes we do worry that Vengeance might lack a distinct musical identity simply because we are not an AOR melodic band and we are not a metal band, but fall somewhere in-between. And that in itself exerts a certain amount of pressure as time passes. I mean I'm not saying that we would split up or anything if it doesn't, but we do feel it is vitally important for 'Arabia' to start breaking some new ground for the band as far as sales go. Because to be honest after a while you start wondering just what's happening. You get good reviews, everyone you talk to likes the band but you still don't break. In a sense we are doing all that we can as far as the music goes and now hopefully the future looks brighter because the two main problems outside our control have finally been remedied. As yet we have never supported a major band on a major tour and we have never been allowed to do a video to promote our material, which in 1989 is ridiculous. Now CBS/Epic have told us that the money will be available to do a support tour with a name act, it's just a question of who and when, and we have recently completed shooting a video for the track 'Arabia'. At the moment we have nothing planned except for a tour of Holland in September, where we will play fifteen or so dates in just over a month and a half. The rest is in the hands of the gods." Or English and American CBS/Epic?

JOHN DUKE



R WORD X No. 017

BY DOT MATRIX

Time for a Guns N' Roses RoxWord.. and where the answers below are a lyric, the spelling is always the same as on the album! *(Any true G N'R fan who want to buy them an early Xmas prezzie could do a lot worse than get them a computer with a spelling checker - or even just a dictionary!)*

First five entries out of the Slash hat win a covered Metal Hammer tee shirt.

Entries should be sent to: RoxWord, Metal Hammer, 3rd Floor, 59 Queens Gardens, London W2 3HF.

To arrive by the 21st August 1989.

CLUES

ACROSS:

1 Lies, the -------- truth *(8)*
6 It's so ---- *(4)*
7 Appetite For Destruction, First 2nd Engineer Andy *(5)*
9 I, I wanna hear ----cream. *(Welcome To The Jungle) (4)*
11 See 16 Across *(3)*
12 I got a Molotov cocktail with a match -- --. *(Nightrain) (2,2)*
13 *(and 22 down)* And you're a very ---- ----. *(Welcome To The Jungle) (4,4)*
14 Turn around bitch - --- a use for you. *(6 across) (1,3)*
15 Reckless ---- *(4)*
16 *(And 11 across)* Be my rubbermade baby -- -- -- do it all. *(21 down) (2,2,3)*
18 I'd probably break --- and cry *(1 down) (4)*
19 Large Birmingham Venue *(1,1,1,)*
20 ---- ask me where. *(6 Across) (4)*
23 You can't tell me - ---- my head. *(Out Ta Get Me) (1,4)*
24 Vocalise! *(4)*
26 Izzy rhythm *(8)*

DOWN:

1 Sugary kid belongs to me?! *(5,5,1,4)*
2 Ragz to richez -- -- they say. *(Paradise City) (2,2,)*
3 Appetite Thanks List initially. *(Music Connection, Rock Scene) (1,1)*
4 Say baby you been lookin' real ----. *(Think About You) (4)*
5 Bass player *(4,4,7)*
8 Used To ---- Her. *(4)*
10 I smoke my cigarette with -----. *(Nightrain) (5)*
13 Guitar rest. *(5)*
17 We got evrything you ----. *(Welcome To The Jungle) (4)*
21 Anything ---- *(4)*
22 See 13 Across *(4)*
25 California Zip Code *(1,1)*

ANSWERS to Metal Hammer RoxWord 016,
Across: 1. Justice For, 4. My Only, 6. Too, 9. Set, 10. Speech, 11. The End, 14. Infant, 16. Ruo, 17. Die, 18. Friend, 20. Fear Of Fear
Down: 1. James Hetfield, 2. Shortest, 3. E.Q., 5. Lars, 7. Of The Beholder, 8. Green, 12. Heads, 13. Dyers Eve, 15. Tear, 19. P.R.,

LIVE ON STAGE

Pics: Didi Zill

WHITE LION

CNE Grandstand Toronto, Canada

White Lion unleashed its melodic metal to 12,000 insatiable headbangers at the CNE Grandstand as part of a triple bill that began with L.A.'s Vixen and peaked with Ozzy Osbourne.

Earlier on that day, I was sitting backstage chatting up White Lion vocalist Mike Tramp, probably the most gorgeous frontman in rock today. So I'm expecting the typical 'god's gift' mentality, that excessive charm and flirtation that Kip Winger has a rep for spreading thickly on female music journalists (to woo a favourable story no doubt). But no luck here. Tramp is not your usual rocker.

Their new LP 'Big Game' confronts some conscience-raising themes: 'Little Fighter', Cry For Freedom', 'Apartheid', 'Broken Home' *(parental responsibility)*. Not your usual subjects, either. Tramp speaks earnestly about them all.

Then there's Tramp's blueprint for success. He just wants to climb the ladder one wrung at a time. No expressways to Guns n'Roses status for him. Personally I don't blame him after the mess Poison made of their career, wanting too much too soon *(the venomous group kicked off the concert season back in May, and, pardon the Americanism, really sucked the big one)*. So what kind of show can we expect from White Lion? Will they continue to dash rock convention to the ground and leave the cliches to Vixen and rebellion to Oz?

The answer turned out to be a resounding pumping No. when Tramp, guitarist Vito 'Blaze' Bratta, bassist James Lorenzo and drummer Greg D'Angelo carved into selections from 'Pride' and 'Big Game', they did so with all the majestic qualifications of a tightly bolted hard rock machine. I hesitate to call these guys full-fledged metal because they're more melodious than most and more accessible. And they can be just as conventional as the next act, so put that in your fedora and trash it.

Given a decent looking stage set up with a ramp and generous lighting effects *(more than Vixen, but less than Ozzy)*, the band never failed to make use of it, especially Tramp. Dressed to kill in a colourful fringe jacket and skin-tight pants adorned with the Joker's face on the far side of both thighs, Tramp strutted the full-length of the stage from the opening chords of 'Let's Go Crazy' to the finale *(50 minutes later)*, a cover of Golden Earring's 'Radar Love' recorded on 'Big Game'. He doffed his Danish accent *(and later his jacket and shirt)* for the more rock n'roll drawl of his L.A. base, whenever he addressed the crowd. This guy has the moves down pat.

"I was talking to someone before the show who said, 'don't expect too much from the crowd in Toronto. I think he was wrong," Tramp recounted. That move scored the usual ten points. Bratta chocked up points of his own with some explosive passages on the six-string. 'Living On The Edge' was given a down-and-out reading as were most of the songs! This sometimes invited problems for Tramp whose croaking yearning vocals were edged out by the pyrotechnics. But when it came to 'When The Children Cry', Tramp made 12,000 hardened metalloids shiver in the middle of summer.

Then there's Ozzy. He can make anyone shiver! All that's changed in his stage show these past 20 years is a conspicuous absence of gory props. But in his pre-amble to 'Suicide Solution' when he declares he *"doesn't give a f**k"* about Tipper Gore's allegations, we know Ozzy hasn't changed. He still implores his followers to clap ad nauseam whenever he's not at the mic, and scampers like a chicken with his head cut off. Surrounding himself as always with first-rate backing, he belted out hellfire from the new 'No Rest For The Wicked' LP and slipped in a few crowd-pleaser Sabbath tunes.

KAREN BLISS

D.A.D.

Roskilde/Denmark

Have you ever rocked with 60,000 Danes? That's what I was lucky enough to have the pleasure of doing at the infamous Roskilde Festival in Denmark this year. D.A.D, who started out as Disneyland After Dark, were the highlight of the event. Not surprising, because it's quite an achievement to sell more than 90,000 copies of a single LP in a country like Denmark with its population of only five million inhabitants. And Jesper Binzer *(vocals)*, Stig Pedersen *(bass)*, Jacob Binzer *(lead guitar)* and Peter L. Jensen *(drums)* more than deserved to headline the show that day.

During TNT's set *(they were on stage before D.A.D.)*, most of the kids had started lying flat on their backs, drained from the two previous hard-working days spent at the festival. The short nap didn't last long for most of them, and as soon as they heard the first notes from their fave band glaring out of the speakers, the festival field turned into a giant open air loony bin. The whole organisation coped well with the situation. Although a large proportion of the audience was already wasted and pissed thanks to excessive booze consumption, the mood was easy going and relaxed. The security were excellent, and the bouncers treated the fans with the respect they deserved! Sure, they were doing their job, but compared to some English gigs, the bouncers were chatting amicably to large parts of the crowd. There was even the occasional flirt going on. When the Danish police even started bopping along to the beat, the open air extravaganza had finally reached its highlight.

D.A.D played numbers off their three albums in a set that was tight and compact, emphasising the songs off their most recent LP 'No Fuel Left For The Pilgrims'. Their sound is a mixture of sixties guitar sound combined with modern arrangements and a trendy stage show, and the Danes easily surpassed all their support bands. D.A.D. mark the revival of the semi-acoustic electric guitar made by Gretsch. The band have helped this antique instrument to a new lease of life - let's hope it catches on!

"I always have to think of 'Ghostriders In The Sky' a Danish girl chuckled.

"It's amazing" D.A.D. bass-player Stig explained, eating chicken and drinking beer after the concert. *"Our fans stole a cows skull off the stage a few years ago. These people are back in the front rows again. Still clutching the skull."* The fans seemed a lot more fanatical than the Danes usually make the impression of being. That's probably why Stig Petersen went on stage donning a red cross helmet. The thin Dane is one of the bands' main focal points anyway. Depending on his mood, he'd climb onto the canvas roof of the stage, fire rockets from his hat and entertained the 60,000 present fans dressed as a magician. D.A.D consist of four excellent musicians, who all work as hard as each other. The time just slipped away during the 120 minutes of their gig. Catch them next time they are in England!

STEFAN KERZEL

SEA HAGS

The Marquee London

Such was the curiosity aroused by the amount of coverage that Sea Hags have been given in Metal Hammer, even though a train and tube strike seriously curtailed public transport, the Marquee was nevertheless sold out for the band's London debut.

Disneyland After Dark, a likely sounding band with a relentless guitar attack and a good, solid drummer, opened the evening. Someone should have a word with the bass player concerning his ludicrous appearance; D.A.D. are a bunch of tall, blond, hunky Danes and would be

Pic: Tony Mottram

smart to play on that fact. Anyway, on tonight's showing, the forthcoming album should be worth checking out.

Nervousness was only to be expected from the Sea Hags, but by the time the band reached 'All The Time', the fourth number in the set, they had settled themselves into their stride. Guitarist Frankie Wilsey slugged off thick, meaty riffs, his head bent over his instrument with concentration, his black leather cap hiding his eyes from the audience. Chris Schlosshardt's bass provided the basic throbbing undercurrents that run through each song like an essential heartbeat, while drummer Adam Maples was a severe taskmaster, setting a spanking pace for the rest of the band.

For vocalist Ron Yocom, the night had its problems. Apart from slipping on the stage early in the set, it soon became obvious that he was very 'tired' and his repetitious apologies for his 'excitement' soon became tiresome. In addition, the sound on the vocals was not clear, which rendered Yocom's menacing, snarled lyrics indistinct and muffled. However, these problems aside, he proved himself to be an intriguing and energetic frontman.

The band turned in an interesting set for their new audience, but the fun really started towards the end of the show, when Ron decided to try his hand at stage-diving - without first removing his guitar! Concerned roadies retrieved him and guitar and left Ron to the mercy of the crowd, who were delighted to find him amongst them and patted him encouragingly.

Sea Hags lurched to the end of their set and returned to shamble their way through an improvised blues encore, during which I decided that Ron was making up the words as he went along. (When I asked him about it the following day, he shrugged, *"What else can you do when you're trying to feel your way through the floor?"*)

A rather strange London debut and one that brought mixed reactions; some were inclined to dismiss Sea Hags as an over-hyped band, *"a watered down Guns n'Roses"*. I would agreed that some of their songs sound a little too similar when played live, but they are a young band that is still in its embryonic stages. I would hazard that, with some more touring experience and more diversity in their material, Sea Hags could turn into veritable monsters of rock.

VALERIE POTTER

Pic: Tony Mottram

GEORGIA SATELLITES
SEA HAGS
Town & Country Club

The general consensus of the people I've spoken to is that the only people the Sea Hags didn't disappoint were the batallions of groupies determined to shag a Hag before they get to be famous. In three years time there will be more women in London claiming to have slept with this band during their stay this Summer than there were people packed into the T.& C. waiting to see what the latest headband collective from the U.S. could deliver.

Following their boozy ramblings of too-loud, too-drunk haze at The Marquee, the band were tighter at the T. & C., and delivered a battering version of most of the tracks on the album. All the same they didn't ignite with quite the same flame that I'd expected. Their blocks of hard chords were enough to give me a satisfying thumping headache.

That, I'm afraid to say, is more than I could say for the Sats. Perhaps the fact that 'Open All Night' did very poor business in the States has jaded them, but for all the sweaty bodies piling through the T. & C., leaving rivers of perspiration in their wake, I couldn't help thinking that I was watching a band past their peak.

The best bar band in the world are turning into a U.S. Status Quo in front of my eyes. Dan Baird still quivers his legs and they still kick out 'loud as hell', but 'Battleship Chains', 'Sheila', 'Keep Your Hands To Yourself' and the rest don't seem so fresh. Their cover of 'Don't Pass Me By' still raises a smile, and they do a wicked 'Games People Play', but at the end of the day...I left to catch the last tube safe in the knowledge that I couldn't possibly miss anything too hot by leaving early.

ROCK LOBSTER

WRATHCHILD AMERICA

Streets, New Rochelle New York

Waiting... waiting... waiting is what Wrathchild America has been doing. All too familiar is the cross-Atlantic legal fisticuffs that have been going on between both 'Wrathchilds', hence the official adoption of 'Wrathchild America' by the Baltimore quartet.

With the imminent release of 'Climbing The Walls', the American power unit is on the verge of something big! The band has to be seen on stage to be fully appreciated. Not to put the album down by any means, *(it is quite impressive)* but the band is simply irrepressible on stage. They created an atmosphere that few bands have ever done at Streets. Audience electricity should be this high at some gigs that I suffer!

Wrathchild America is a crowd band as they rely heavily on audience reaction. And there isn't a crowd that they can't win over. This evening at Street's was no exception. Jumping on stage, the band ripped into 'Hell's Gates' reminiscent of popping the lid off of a pressure cooker. The band opened their gig with the force of a Mike Tyson *"let's take that head off"* right hook. You'll never see raised lighters at a Wrathchild gig. That's reserved for the less talented, make-up flaunting bands on the scene.

Lead vocalist and five string bassist Bard Divens' raspy vocals enabled him to take the stage as a perfect frontman. You might remember Diven's appearance on Kix' 'Cool Kids' several years ago. The former guitarist definitely creates the perfect bass groove for Wrathchild America to ride their well-polished set through.

A highlight of this 'band of many highlights' has to be the energetic playing of guitarist Terry Carter. He is the only man that I have seen who can match Angus Young, calorie burn for calorie burn, in the neck wrenching department. The axeman seemed not content until he flung his head completely off his shoulders as he whipped his long blonde tresses in an atomic windmill, effortlessly grinding through such sweet tunes as 'Candy From A Madman', 'No Deposit No Return', 'Silent Darkness' and 'Climbing The Walls' - all from the band's pending debut release.

Fellow guitarist Jay Abbene is not upstaged in the least as he supplies some death-defying leads to go with some spine-pounding rhythms.

Drummer Shannon Larkin is something of an all-star and must-catch on stage. The nitro-footed lanky drummer is pure unleashed energy. His thunderous paws are the driving force of the band. An original member *(he formed the band with Carter in 1981)*, Larkin is one of the least recognised *(and one of this writer's favourite)* drummers on the scene today. One listen to 'Candy From A Madman' and it is 'eat your heart out Dave Lombardo'.

A band whose originals are most memorable and creative, Wrathchild America deals some serious creativity to their chosen cover tunes. Flogged by many for covering Pink Floyd's 'Time' on the debut disc *(can't figure this, for it's a splendid rendition)* the band certainly pulls off the tune flawlessly on stage. Just what the doctor ordered - Pink Floyd with crunchy balls! For the band's sound on this evening was far better than most concerts at the club.

As I looked at the band's set list *(taped on the stage-side amps)*, I noticed a song titled 'Slave'. Thinking it was one of the band's new songs, I couldn't believe it when they cranked through the first few riffs. Not a new song, but they were pulling off in the grandest of fashion no less - the Subhuman's classic 'Slave To My Dick'. The crowd simply went berserk! Coupled with the band's cover of the Sex Pistols 'Bodies', *(with drummer Larkin on lead vocals!)* it was the apex of the evening. Can these guys pull off covers or what?!

As the boys wrapped up their fun-filled set with impressive versions of 'London After Midnight' and 'Day Of Thunder'.

I've seen the band several times to date and haven't been disappointed yet. Now that they have their legal battles behind them, the band is primed to resuscitate a boring industry. 'Climbing The Walls' is indeed ready for release after being delayed for some 14 months. When they finally make it to Europe, do not miss them. There are live bands and then there is Wrathchild America!

ED 'EASY' ESPOSITO

TORA TORA

L'Amour, Brooklyn New York

When I first heard Tora Tora's debut album 'Surprise Attack', I was floored. It was the first time since Def Leppard came on the scene that I heard such raw potential from such a young band.

Upon being assigned to cover the band's video shoot for 'Walkin' Shoes' in their hometown of Memphis, Tennessee at the end of May, I also learned that the band also had the looks and charisma to go with the 'sound'. The only question I had was whether or not these guys could pull off such a delightful album in a live setting.

Travelling to the self-proclaimed 'rock capital' of Brooklyn, New York, L'Amour, I entered the too-familiar portals after doing some interview updates with the band during the afternoon. Arriving in Gotham City at 4.00 am, three hours later they began a full day of press interviews, MTV shootings and just about as much promotion that could be packed into the little amount of time that led up to the band's soundcheck. Excited about returning to L'Amour, the boys were obviously feeling the effects from lack of rest. What a night to see the band play for the first time.

Maybe they should put on more gigs when fatigued, because unequivocably, Tora Tora is not a flash-in-the-pan. They are the real thing! In New York terms - they kick heinie live.

When the band hit the stage, they threw down a masterful and flawless set. Full of surprising energy, vocalist Anthony 'Squirt' Corder led his troops through a smashing gig.

'Bluesy', 'expressive' and 'dynamic' are the only words to describe this young and exciting band which hails from the hometown of Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis and the like. Hell, they better be good, right?!

As potent as the band is on record and stage, what truly amazes me is that Corder's 'partners in crime', bassist Patrick 'Spanky' Francis, guitarist Keith 'Stinky' Douglas and drummer John 'Winky' Patterson don't realise how good they really are. They are just having fun playing on stage doing what comes naturally easy. In fact what they do comes naturally to Tora Tora when so many other bands on the scene bust their asses trying to make it happen.

What gives Tora Tora the proverbial 'X-factor' is somewhat indefinable, but one thing that is undeniable is their massive repertoire. That is what makes 'Surprise Attack' so special - so many good songs.

From the time the band hit the stage with 'One For The Road', the crowd was with 'em all the way.

Ripping through '28 Days', 'Riverside Drive', 'Being There', and *(Corder's fave)* 'Hard Times', these young warriors effortlessly commanded the stage. It was a pure joy for this reviewer who has seen way too many mediocre gigs of late! Having such a great time at the gig, I decided to blow out seeing one of my other favourite bands, Skid Row, to hang out with Tora Tora at the following night's gig in Long Island, New York.

The high point of Tora Tora's evening was 'Guilty', probably their finest tune. Corder's total cool on stage and is a joy to behold. Just a few weeks past his 20th birthday, it is obvious that his complete stage presence is something one is born with and that can't be taught or 'purchased'. He was outrageous during the song.

The song's sheer commercial power, along with Tora Tora's other impressive tunes, is something that will undoubtedly carry the band to worldwide acceptance.

Winding down their set, they turned in a fabulous rendition of 'Walkin' Shoes', their movie soundtrack tune 'Dancin' With A Gypsy' and the Van Halenish 'She's Good, She's Bad'.

The set closer and potential follow-up single *(Yes, Richard!)* 'Phantom Rider' and 'Love's A Bitch' saw Tora Tora scoop the crowd up and carry them off into the mighty sunset.

The management team that has brought the world Overkill and White Lion indeed has another winner on their hands.

Cheers to a bunch of great musicians and, by the way, nice guys!

'EASY' ED ESPOSITO

FAITH no more

THE RIGHT STUFF

SAT IN the lounge of the Columbia Hotel, Faith No More's guitar god Jim Martin and the unfortunately named keyboard player Roddy Bottum are enjoying the delights of English bitter. Not so new boy Mike Patton, who's athleticism comes in part from his avoidance of alcohol.

F.N.M.'s latest slab of overlapping noises and straining attack is 'The Real Thing', their first since the well publicised departure of wigged-out mohawk crooner Chuck Mosely, with much attention focused on 'the replacement'.

"What's the difference between me and Jim?" asked new boy Mike Patton, before I even contemplated bringing the subject up.

O.K., what is the difference?

Mike: *"Bitter and cola."*

"Bitter is better. Can I get it at home? Only in special places." according to Jim 'the glasses' Martin *"I'm very much short sighted. In fact, I believe I'm legally blind."*

Despite Patton joining F.N.M., his old band Mr.Bungle are soldiering on.

"They're still together to this day."

Indeed Patton claims to still be a member.

Jim: *"If he's there when we need him, we don't give a f*** what he does otherwise."*

Mike: *"It's more of a fun thing, everybody else in Mr.Bungle goes to school or has jobs."*

Does this follow in the tradition started by Chuck Mosely, who's other outfit was Haircuts That Kill?

Roddy shrugs *"Yeah, but he never did anything with his other band, he just talked about it. It never really happened."*

Jim claims membership of Spastic Children (an occasional Metallica offshoot), Vicious Hatred and Pigs Of Death...

"We all like playing, it's just like friends getting together and jamming. Faith No More's our bread and butter, but the other things are more for fun. That's not to say that Faith No More's not fun, but we're getting paid for it. That's really great."

WHEN THE band twice toured the U.K. to promote 'Introduce Yourself', the press made much of the internal bitching, fighting and conflict within the (then) aggro-filled quintet. The simmering tension was credited as the driving force behind the band, particularly when it seemed to erupt through the music on stage.

"I don't think that internal tension thing ever had much to do with the music." frowns Roddy, *"It was something the press picked up on, they wanted something to write about and we happened to fight a lot at the time. I mean the rest of the band, without Chuck, has always written the music, that's the way it is now."*

But you don't deny there was a lot of grief going on at the time, Jim?

"How can we deny it?"

Roddy: *"It just wasn't as interesting to us as it seemed to be to people over here."*

And of course, having seen the new line up perform with just as much bruising energy as of old, I can only confirm that there are no deficiencies evident now that the band have stopped swinging punches at each other.

WITH THE internal self destruct urges removed, maybe they'll be in the running for some serious success. How huge could the band get, Jim?

"The huger the better. But if it doesn't get huge we're still going to do it anyway."

Roddy: *"The hugeness of it is just a consequence of what we're gonna continue to do regardless. We're gonna keep playing the music we like and if it gets huge that's great."*

Whether the public are going to turn on to F.N.M.'s rock-a-delic thunderstorm remains to be seen. Despite their liberal bastardisation of trad. rock values to make way for tribal funk and rap, Faith seem to have gained easier acceptance within the rock fraternity than most 'fringe' acts. Of course, the patronage of acts like Metallica hasn't done any harm.

'THE REAL THING' takes the brooding musical assault of tracks like 'Chinese Arithmetic' and 'The Crab Song' from 'Introduce Yourself' further, with increased depth and colour courtesy of Roddy's growing keyboard contribution. This is combined with a set of lyrics from Patton which vary from the excellent Slayeresque 'Surprise! You're Dead!' to the whirlpool of 'Underwater Love' and the emotional fragmentation of 'Falling To Pieces'.

Are you a bitter and twisted individual, Mike?

"Sometimes. I think there's a lot of stuff in the lyrics that almost everybody feels. Most of the lyrics and the songs are really moody with a lot of mood shifts."

Jim: *"Then again, most everybody is a bitter and twisted individual at some point."*

For some reason the track 'Zombie Eaters' has nothing to do with Romero-inspired splatter movies. It's a world as seen through a baby's eyes. You wouldn't guess from *"There's always zombies eating human flesh, right? So I kind of figured out people might eat zombies, it's kind of a joke."* Weird.

'Surprise! You're Dead' has to have the best line on the album, with the brutal, blunt *"Surprise! You're Dead!, Guess what? It never ends..."*. Clive Barker could have done no better for stark, minimalist horror.

Jim: *"That's more to do with Dracula. Who's the guy who started writing those stories? Bram Stoker? Based on the idea of the undead. Pretty horrible. It's definitely Slayer influenced for sure. I like Slayer a lot."*

So what direction is the band going in, Jim?

"Ahead."

Nastier?

"Sure, sometimes. Just more of everything. Nicer too, sometimes."

So is the big pop single round the corner?

"It'll be an accident if it does. 'We Care A Lot' was an accident, we just played the song and everybody liked it."

Could you see yourself opening for a stadium band like Whitesnake?

Roddy: *"Nah, we're just going to tour by ourselves for a while. We're trying to get on the Metallica tour, we think that might happen in the States round about September."*

Jim: *"I'd like to tour with Robert*

Plant, he likes us! Why not? He was a hero, y'know? I grew up listening to Led Zeppelin, learned to play guitar listening to Led Zeppelin.''

Then he made some horrible solo albums?

''I can't deny it, but he's still great y'know, even though I hate his music.''

Roddy: *''I like his sampled stuff, y'know the one where he throws in all these Zeppelin riffs.''*

Jim: *''At least he's coming to terms with it. There was a time when he wanted to deny Led Zeppelin. It seemed like that anyway, I'm glad at least he came around.''*

And from one classic dinosaur rock band to another, and the legacy of one O. Osbourne Esq...

FOR ME, the real disappointment about 'The Real Thing' is the fact that their grungy slab of a cover version of Sabbath's raging 'War Pigs' is relegated to C.D. and cassette formats only. As a vinyl junkie, I'd rather have seen it on the album, and I'm sure that it would have cemented their metal credibility beyond question.

''There wasn't enough room.'' explains Roddy, *''The other songs would have suffered because there wasn't enough space on vinyl. We had too many songs.''*

No desire to drop one of your own tracks to get 'War Pigs' onto the vinyl, Jim?

''We like our own material the best. But talkin' about Black Sabbath, that was the first record I ever bought, I love Sabbath. The first song I ever played on guitar was a Black Sabbath song, 'Iron Man'.''

Are you still a Michael Schenker fan?

''Yeah. I haven't heard any of his newer stuff but I still like his old stuff. I digged UFO when he was in it. And I liked the Scorpions when Ulrich Roth was with them, when he left the Scorpions were over for me.''

O.K., SO the truth is that the interview starts degenerating due in no small part to the lager consumed by your humble narrator. Be warned, dumb questions coming up...

So what would you want to win if you were on 'The Price Is Right', Jim?

''A new car or a hundred thousand bucks.''

So what do ya drive at the moment?

''I borrow my dad's truck when I'm home. He's good enough to loan me his truck.''

Would you loan a truck to someone who behaved a lot like you?

*''F*** no! No way! I don't trust anybody with any of my stuff.''*

Why not?

''Cause it's my stuff. I don't like people touching my stuff.''

What's your favourite stuff?

''My favourite stuff? My stereo, my dick, my tapes and CD's, that's about it.''

Mark Day

HEAVY METAL WORLDWIDE

BULLET LAVOLTA

'The Band That Took It's Name From A Beatnik Poet Commissioned By The Ford Motor Company In The Fifties To Come Up With A Name For Their Latest Model!'

I'm sitting, no make that slouching, in a tavern of ill repute in good old London Town and Bullet LaVolta guitarist and founder member Clay Tarver is telling me all I wanted to hear. Which is more than I do for you, huh? You see Clay freely admits to one of my more important theories, that Bullet LaVolta are part of an almost instinctive crossover movement attempting to produce rock and roll for the nineties with a sensitive meshing of punk energy, metal riffs and accessible melodies. What sort of bands are we talking about? Well, SNFU, The Goo Goo Dolls and the mighty, mighty Government Issue just for starters!

''Government Issue are probably the band that have influenced me the most. They were one of the first hardcore groups to slow it down and pay attention to the songs. Just take a listen to their last album 'Crash'. Like they have this perfect guitar tone and extremely strong chord changes, write brilliant songs and all in all are one of the most criminally underrated bands in America! (Feverish Duke does nodding dog impression into pint of lager.) And your right there certainly does seem to be a few groups getting together and producing a more commercial crossover sound, like obviously Government Issue, but also The Goo Goo Dolls and Naked Raygun. These are bands all hitting good, strong chords, and writing SONGS, when so many other bands are into this metal, speed thing. Crossover is still mainly thought of as punk bands learning to play their instruments and turning metal. It might have been once, but it's not now. Naked Raygun really started the change, going for a rock heavy beat, without attempting to be metal. You can be heavy without being heavy metal you can have the energy of punk without being hardcore. It just has to be channelled into a rock groove, into a feeling.''

I've noticed that the lyrics also tend to be more in keeping with the age old spirit of rock and roll, dealing with subjective realities rather than general social/political statements?

''Yes, our lyrics are very personal and specifically about everyday feelings, like being frustrated with your job, your girlfriend, whatever. The one rule we have about lyrics is that they don't get beyond themselves, you know? They have to connect with the songs, a simple point to supplement that rock and roll feel.''

So would you say that having the right ATTITUDE to playing crossover is a unifying factor between Bullet LaVolta and the other bands?

''It's essential. And I think it's clear that some people don't know what to do with crossover and that goes for journalists as well. Like this guy from Sounds asked me what it's like to play in a band making music that would never be successful. He obviously sees our stuff as a spiralling after effect of something that went on four or five years ago. That's simply not true and that's not how the bands see it. This will break and if anyone has any doubts over that then they should come and see us live, that's where our stuff really comes into its own. That's when you can feel the groove and that's when people will really understand the potential, because doing it on stage is what rock and roll is all about and we are playing rock and roll for NOW.

It's probably not just a question of changing the perception of certain journalists but also the major record companies.

''Bullet LaVolta and bands like us are in a weird position in America. I think that's reflected by the fact that independent music in the States is in a period of transition. You see there's not really a hardcore scene that we are a part of, or a metal scene, we are sort of working out in a nebulous uncategorised area. Nobody really knows how or where to place us as yet. Hopefully as more bands come along and those already doing it become more popular things will change and we can finally carve out an established niche of our own.''

The fact that your not easily pigeon holed musically could be the reason you've had to play on some strange bills, opening in the past for everyone from The Swans to Siouxsie And The Banshees!

''Yeah, but then I really enjoyed doing those shows, like with The Banshees we performed in larger theatres, before 3,000 people or so, but we do get mismatched occasionally. Even our latest tour with The Lemonheads and Energetic Crusher is a weird bill, with every band having a very different sound, but again it guaranteed playing in front of a lot of people, and as the tour progressed all the groups gained fans from each another. It turned out that we were more popular in Germany than the Lemonheads but they sort of took over in England so we alternated headlining as the situation dictated.''

Bullet LaVolta are a two handed guitar band and sometimes with both axes blasting out riffs simultaneously things do become a mite chaotic. Would Clay agree that their songs weren't as structured as some of the other groups?

''Probably. On record we tried to make it as much like a live thing as possible. There are very few overdubs, some of the vocals are straight off efforts, because we wanted to leave the rough edges. For Bullet LaVolta it's important to have a song with a sharp idea and then let it flow, hit that rock sort of groove and take it from there, rather than adopt the constricting chorus, verse format. As a band we aren't into doing the obvious things.''

JOHN DUKE

STEEL VENGEANCE

A band can encounter many unexpected things ion one year. But Steel Vengeance have had numerous surprises ever since they formed way back in 1983. Michael Wickstrom, founder member, guitarist and producer in the band has been through 'All the ups and downs of the business'. That's why he is also convinced, that 'the only way is up'.

After a good start with their first demos and even the first couple of LPs that were warmly received in Europe as well as in Japan, the next turmoil was when internal problems started to occur. This all happened at around the same time of the release of the album 'Prisoners', a harder album than the first three, and the critics loved it!

Michael Wickstrom was forced to look for new people, because of drug problems and differences of opinion between the members of the band. So he went to the Holy Land of LA to look foe some 'clean' musicians, He's now found them. Otherwise we would never have got to hear the third Steel Vengeance LP 'Never Lettin' Go'. The first candidate for the new line-up was Glenn Rogers, who despite being only 23 has already played guitar with Hero, Deliverance, Heretic, Dark Angel and Viking. John Draper *(29)* plays the drums, and the remaining two musicians are still both teenies: 'Killer' Ceŗegatti *(what a name)* is from the land of Sepulturas *(that's Brazil)* and plays bass, and singer Scott Nocon is just 18. You can tell on the new album how professional he sounds!

The total metamorphosis does not seem to have done much harm. Despite being American, their sound its remarkable European, even though it's quite basic. But it's got substance. We're bound to hear quite a bit more from the band if Mr. Wickstrom keeps the boys in tow. They're even thinking of coming over to the UK in Autumn!

All other major

'Progressive Hardcore Anyone?'

This three piece took their name from an anti rape slogan, hail from Vancouver, Canada, and comprise brothers Rob and John Wright on bass and drums with guitarist Andy Kerr *(ex Infamous Scientists)* making up the numbers. Their sound has been described as 'High tech jazz funk angst, punk, minimalist, high volume, goof rock.' And that's a gross simplification!

But, being a mite dodgy to categorise, the band have unfortunately been sucked into the vortex of styles that labour under the hardcore label and have therefore been caught performing alongside such crossover stalwarts as SNFU. But their sound isn't really hardcore as most people would perceive it. I suggested as much to John.

"Progressive hardcore perhaps! No, actually I think it is, in so far as the energy and enthusiasm goes. Anybody who plays whatever style of music with the right amount of drive and sincerity could be considered hardcore. For example whenever I write a song I always check the lyrics to make sure that everything I've written I believe in. That's the way it has to be. But then hardcore is white middle class suburban music and we are white middle class suburban people! It all comes from the same source. Obviously our actual sound is far more varied than your typical hardcore and more for someone who is into MUSIC as opposed to a particular style, someone who wants to hear something different. People who like high energy rock music with diversity."

Lyrically the latest album 'Small Parts Isolated And Destroyed' is a record of contrasts. It carves a stark, bleak, almost suicidal landscape, saved only by an irreverent strain of black humour.

"Well my brother Robbie does most of the writing and it's true he does like to dig into the uh, darker side of things. As a band we enjoy talking about subjects that don't normally get aired. To find something profound to say you really have to dig through all sorts of psychological shit. To change something you have to expose it, show it for what it is. The black humour is there as a release valve, to alleviate things when it all gets too much."

Nomeansno write long, on occasion very long, *(ten minute)* wandering epics that can become extremely complicated. For the uninitiated it might be confusing. Is it hard to draw the line?

"Yes, at times I think we do get a little self-indulgent, but that's only because we are so involved in the music. The longer songs are actually quite calculated but for anyone who has never heard the band before I can see how our latest album might very well stretch the limits of their patience!"

Listening to NMN with the oblique lyricism and the diverse musical approach it all appears rather artsy, but in the best sense of the word. Does the band draw inspiration from literature as well as music?

"Definitely in Robbies case. He writes very seriously and is a huge James Joyce fan. I think he will probably end up being an author. Link that to a sound that musically touches all bases and you can see that when we write we really have a lot to draw from. It usually results in the band going for a certain feel rather than OTT technical impressiveness as in cliched metal. In many ways it's a crazy combination of elements. We were inspired by British punk and now draw on everything from jazz to heavy rock! I like to think of our sound as an outburst that disturbs, that makes the listener think and react. Most of todays music empties you out rather than fills you up. We want to try and fill you up."

JOHN DUKE

TUFF

"WE'VE DONE OUR HOMEWORK"

Tuff are one of the biggest drawing unsigned bands in California. In a little over a year, Tuff have climbed their way to the top league of live acts on the Los Angeles scene. They have promoted, played and have continuously sold out such L.A. clubs as Gazzari's, the Troubadour, the Whiskey and the 1000 seater Country Club. The band have created a huge following, have a fan club of over 10,000 and are being rewarded handsomely for their efforts.

But they haven't been signed yet. So I got down to the facts with motormouth Stevie Rachael.

"Well, we got big in five minutes flat. A lot of things came at us really fast. When we first came out, a lot of people came to see us and we weren't totally ready on a professional level as far as our show and our songs were concerned."

When Tuff first came out with singer Stevie, they were a lot more glam, their music was weaker, and they were considered Poison clones.

*"Yeah, I admire Poison, I admire Bret Michaels, 'cause he's an awesome frontman but I don't want to be shadowed by him. I don't want to be thought of as some pretty boy wimpy f***in' dude, 'cause I'm not. I don't mind if people say I look like Bret Michaels. I have blonde hair and big lips, but so do Vince Neil and David Lee Roth; Bret was a clone for them for years anyway. I don't care what people say about me and the band because I know that I'm different and so is the band. So we had all the comparisons to Poison. That's why we changed the image to a more 'Tuff' looking one."*

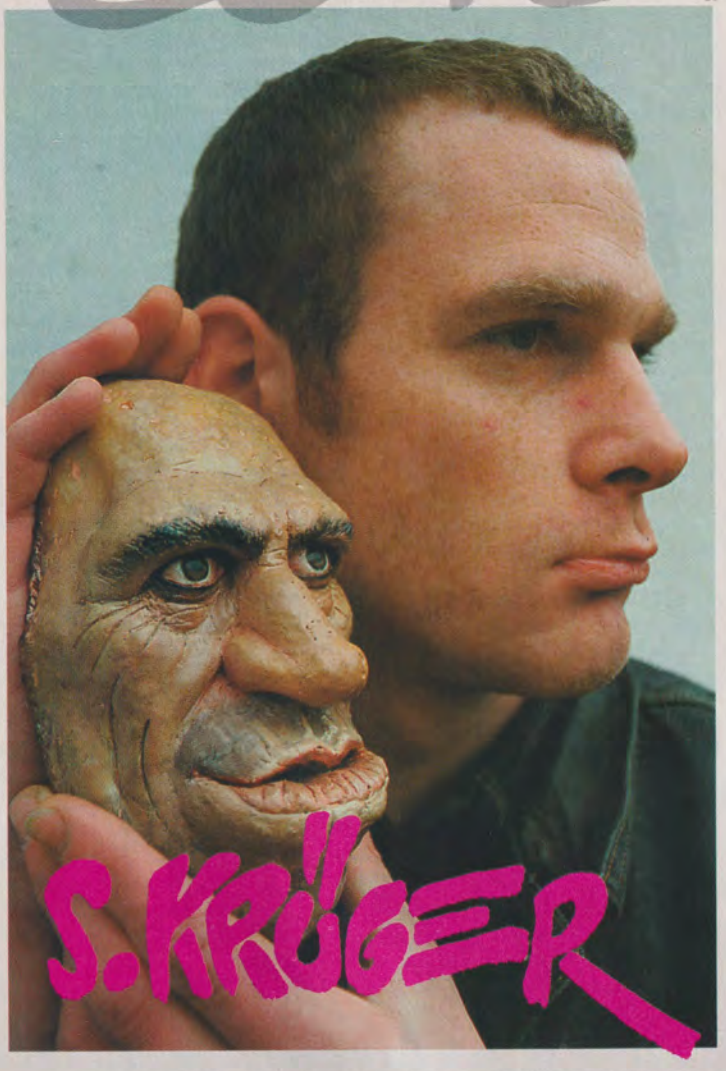
Being asked how he felt about bands like Pretty Boy Floyd, who used to support Tuff, getting a major deal before them, Stevie replied, *"It frustrates us a little, because we're well prepared in every single category of the biz, but how much experience do Pretty Boy Floyd have? They haven't even played 20 shows together. They never went out of town, they never had to go up against the bad crowd. We did! There's a lot of bands getting signed, but you know, Black n'Blue for example got signed before Poison, and look where Black n'Blue are now, they've put out four albums and haven't even sold 200,000 units. So as far as somebody getting signed ahead of us goes, it doesn't bother me too much, 'cause I know that when our stuff happens, it's going to happen correctly and we're going to be very aware and prepared for anything that comes at us."*

So when are the band going to get their obviously well deserved record contract?

*"If at any point in the past six or eight months that we've been around, it's right now. We've always looked at everything, like 'How marketable is our band as far as our looks are concerned?', or 'What are we going to do for a video?'. We have concepts for videos, staging and songs, we've got what it takes to put across to people what Tuff is all about. We have this huge fan club, we have tons of mail, tons of press. And we've got a show that is incredible. We have backdrops, we have lots of gear, we have endorsements, the works. We're f***in' ready to go, we've done our homework, we've promoted, we've done the streets, we've sold out the Country Club, we've played in front of 3500 people with the Bullet Boys. All we need now is a record deal to prove our strength to the kids from Los Angeles to Florida to England to Japan."*

FRED BERAUD

COVER-ART



Band members, producers and even studio musicians are interviewed by the music press all the time and thousands of fans are familiar with the work they do. But these aren't the only hard-working people responsible for creating the finished musical masterpiece by your favourite band.

When record buyers comb their local stores, it's the record's cover design that will initially attract their attention, and the image decorating the sleeve will give a band or a particular artist its all-important image.

Since elaborate and artistic album sleeves started becoming popular in the sixties, designers of rock and heavy metal record sleeves have become cult figures in their own right and some fans will buy a record just because of the sleeve. Independent and underground bands, especially when they are on low advertising budgets rely on fans buying an album on the strength of its sleeve - as fans of the artist, and even trusting his musical taste.

One artist whose work is frequently seen adorning hot new metal releases is Germany's brightest young artistic hope, 26 year old Sebastian Kruger. Sebastian is responsible for designing some of the most exciting heavy metal album sleeves featured regularly in this mag., and his knife-writing and aggressive graphics can be admired on record covers of bands like Running Wild, Tankard, Risk, Steeler and Sodom.

With bands from all over the world showing more and more interest in Herr Kruger's talents, we decided it was time to take a look at one of the hottest up and coming heavy metal graphic artists around ...move over Derek Riggs!

You can imagine a teacher's bottom jaw dropping open when told by a pupil that he wants to '...design heavy metal album sleeves...' when he grows up. Did Sebastian ever feel different from the other boys and girls in his class who wanted to learn more sensible trades, like becoming a train driver?

"I really felt like an outsider right from the start. Especially when I was still at school. I started drawing from the age of three."

Was he a natural talent?

"I don't know if you can call it talent. If anything, I'd say my work consists of fifty per cent talent and fifty per cent hard work. It just interested me. If you start that young and never stop drawing, you just find out one day that you have to draw. First problems occurred when I was six or seven years old. That was when I bought a paint brush that was much to big for me.

I had the first trouble with my parents when I was about seventeen or eighteen - they asked why I didn't want to train to do a proper job, and said I couldn't just become an artist. So my teachers thought of me as being a bit of an outsider as well. Nothing really interested me except for drawing and painting. The kind of things they tried to teach me at school didn't really appeal to me at all. So that's what I wanted to do, and everything's worked out just fine! But I had quite a few difficulties getting there."

Did you ever draw comics?

"Yes, but only one, with my friend Wolfgang Sperzel. Comics aren't really that much fun once you've been doing them for a while, and you don't earn very much money either. Maybe every now and again, just for the fun. That's all."

So many talented artists are as poor as church mice and never make a living from their art. How did you set about earning money?

SCRIBBLING

"...you can be messing and scribbling about for years, before someone discovers you and appreciates your talents... it can take forever." Sebastian admitted. To stop that happening, there are the agencies. The twentieth century would break down without agencies commissioning work, whether in getting bands gigs, enabling models to be paid for having their pix taken, or authors to get their writing published...

And there's also an agency that concentrates solely on negotiating work for comic and illustrators. The artist has time to get on with his work, and can rely on his clients coming to him personally if need be.

How did you first start getting large amounts of commissioned work? Did you work through agencies right from the start, or did you have to go out and hunt down the work yourself?

"I got my own jobs after a while. Things were all fairly harmless in those days. My work only took off properly about three years ago. One of my friends 'discovered ' me when I covered a blackboard with Donald Duck cartoons and caricatures of teachers while I was still at school. He used to run the college paper. So he asked me whether I'd like to draw something for the college paper too. That's what I did.

And it was the same person who saw the advertisement from the agency that I'm now working for. We just walked over with my portfolio, showed it to them and

"The Risk Cover 'Hell's Animals' was meant to take place in a big city. But I decided that a big city atmosphere just wouldn't look right. You find more rockers in these small Californian towns. I just did it, and they still liked the result."

they liked it. And that's how I slowly started. I started illustrating silly things like video covers - that's how simple it was - and similar things, everything else followed from there."

So the better work followed through the agency. How smoothly did all that run? Did you have to do all the classic things like pack shelves in supermarkets to suffer for your art?

"Things have quietened down quite a bit, now everything is running smoothly. Some times are better than other times. But things run well most of the time, and at least I can survive doing what I do!"

And what about the briefs you have to work to? Do people tell you exactly what they want and give you a basic sketch, or do you create the whole design yourself?

"The bands I work for always tell me exactly what they want me to do, something that I think is rather sad. They have a specific idea of how they want their cover to look like, and I sometimes get really frustrated, because they don't seem to be able to draw themselves. Sometimes it's just impossible to achieve what they imagine. Like Running Wild's pirate cover. I just cursed when I drew that one. They gave me an exact plan of their clothes, how big their studs were, what kind of shoe laces they were wearing and everything else. I didn't want to take on the work at first, I thought they were taking the piss. They should have hired a fashion designer, or put a photo on the front cover. It just didn't make sense.

Tankard always let me do what I want to do. I can accommodate my own ideas. I like working with them best.

The Risk Cover 'Hell's Animals' was meant to take place in a big city. But I decided that a big city atmosphere just wouldn't look right. You find more rockers in these small Californian towns. I just did it, and they still liked the result."

At least he doesn't have to create numerous designs, of which only one is used, with the others being chucked into the nearest bin...

"People like that aren't even given a sketch to work by. I'm told what to do, and that's what my clients get. Most of my work is commissioned thorough SPV in Hanover. And they seem to trust me. Since I did the 'Mad Butcher' cover, I haven't really done anything wrong."

ACRYLIC

Apart from all the commissioned work (Sebastian still works with some customers, who don't even know that he's so famous these days and they still regularly commission him with small illustrations), he's designed a grand total of seventeen album sleeves over the years. How did that come to be?

"I did the first record sleeve for Destruction's 'Eternal Devastation' three years ago. It was a really basic design. I had to start getting accustomed to working with acrylic paints. I hadn't ever used them until then. You can tell!"

Do you have to use that kind of paint if you want the artwork reproduced later?

"Yes, it's the best paint to use really. You can correct it too. It's synthetic, it dries instantly and you can later paint five or six layers on top of it. So if you don't like some detail, you can cover it up immediately. That's what acrylic paint is best for.

Basically I always refused to work with airbrushes. I manag-

"I'm in close contact to Tankard and to Buffo. I always try and work out what the guys would really like as well. I try to design every cover, so that it is different and kind of jumps out at you. Like on 'Hell's Animals' for example, or the Tankard Alien. That was really good fun as well."

COVER-ART

ed to get my own way as well! It's just not my style. If I ever get offered work where I would have to do that, I always just say 'No'. There are other people around who'll do it. I wouldn't even try and do it. I can afford to be choosy these days."

Not everyone is really aware of how much work goes into a finished record sleeve, from the first sketches to the final result. How does the final result develop?

"I sometimes sit in front of the art-work and pull at my short hair stubbles. Or things will be completely different - I'll sit down, and things will run really smoothly. I can finish off a cover in two days then.

The phone normally rings at about eleven in the morning or one in the afternoon, with someone on the other end of the line who needs something really desperately. Preferably yesterday. I then tell them that I'll need ten days to finish the work. Normally I'll have about five days to complete a cover, and I usually need only four days. So it's comfortable. I don't exactly get up at seven in the morning and work through until ten.

ROUGH SKETCHES

I couldn't do that anyway. I have to pull myself together sometimes - depending on whether a piece of work is fun or not. That's the most important factor. If it's fun, I can work really fast. If not, I'll sometimes ask whether I can have a little more time to work. The whole thing will start with me making a few rough sketches, then the first draft, and then I start on the paint."

What about the kind of music you're trying to portray and promote with your designs - after all most of the bands you work with are pretty manic... Have you got a personal relationship to these bands, or do you ignore the music they play?

"Most of the band don't interest me. I prefer music by bands like the Stones, the Pistols or Motorhead. Most thrash is so narrow minded. I like Tankard, although I would never listen to the music privately. The only kind of music I really like as far as heavy metal goes is Motorhead. I don't like much else.

It must be a coincidence that I've started working with metal bands like these. I never chose them."

I suppose most musicians don't even react to the covers.

"Tankard always really like the sleeves I do"

Tankard are also the only band who ever thought of inviting their art-work designer to an album presentation.

"I hardly ever socialise with the bands I work with. Especially as most bands are pretty mean when it comes to paying me. I have to sometimes send my agent after them to make them part with the cash.

Then I get a phone call saying something like 'Can you make a cover for that band...' and I've normally forgotten the name again by then. I've often been disappointed about what the guys are like privately, too. They want the hardest, toughest cover, then they sit around in their track suit pants, smoking Marlboro light, drinking diet Coke - and that's all. Everything the band wants to portray, exists on the cover alone, on stage and in front of the fans. It's so superficial. Things are completely different with Lemmy. Or with Keith Richards. He's got a skull on his hand, but he's allowed to - with his past!"

To elaborate on this, the master fetched one of his most recent works of art from the bottom of the cupboard, paintings that developed spontaneously, with lots of feeling, and not on a commission basis. All of a sudden Lemmy's staring at me, like something out of Spitting Image. A brilliant caricature. All you can hope is that this picture will one day be seen by more. The fans would love it.

BOTTLE OF WHISKEY

"I painted that for myself. One evening listening to loud music, Motorhead of course - my neighbours can't hear much - a bottle of whiskey, inspiration and lots of fun."

What about the personal contact to the musicians, whose sleeves you design? "I'm in close contact to Tankard and to Buffo. I always try and work out what the guys would really like as well."

Sebastian Kruger sometimes doesn't quite know what to do, when his art work doesn't go down well with an audience, as a situation recently proved. This time it concerned his fave man Keith Richards.

"I recently had an exhibition in an advertising agency, where everything was painted white. I had a few Keith Richards portraits on display there. And the people didn't like it at all. They wanted the door to that room to stay shut all the time, because his face was so ugly. 'How can you paint such an ugly face' ... People have said that to me quite often. Anyway, Keith sent me a little note after seeing the pictures. He liked them, and that's the biggest success I could possibly imagine. Worth all the money in the world."

He's expecting to run into some difficulties since he recently let

''The bands I work for always tell me exactly what they want me to do, something that I think is rather sad. They have a specific idea of how they want their cover to look like, and I sometimes get really frustrated. Like Running Wild's pirate cover. They gave me an exact plan of their clothes, how big their studs were, what kind of shoe laces they were wearing and everything else.''

and stick to the same method for the next twenty years. You just don't have any controversy in what you do any more then. I'd sometimes like to really shoot the picture. But you have to go through hell occasionally. You have to occasionally destroy things and start afresh. Otherwise things get boring. It's important that there's a bit of feeling behind what you do as well. And a bit of heart. It's a really physical thing, painting. Always. There's not much else to say. That's why people paint, so as not to have to talk too much.''

Matthias Breusch

his fantasy run hay-wire for an album tentatively titled 'Sodomy In Babylon'.

''The idea came from Manfred Schutz from SPV. He approached me and said, 'Sebastian, just imagine old Babylon, that's what we need. Sodomy, know what I mean...? They behave like animals there. Do something'. Anyway, I did and I gave the finished product to SPV. Manfred nearly fainted! He hadn't really imagined what his idea would look like in drawing. I thought it was really funny. We really laughed!''

Do you like being provocative? ''Yes, sometimes. That's what sometimes annoys me with heavy metal bands who only go for something tried and tested. Like the new Sodom sleeve 'Agent Orange'. It includes things like aeroplanes, like in Vietnam with tough guys who shoot around everywhere. That should have been one of my jobs. But I decided to quit. It bored me to death, so boring, it made me sick, that I just couldn't do it. And it glamorised war. I'm not a wimp, but it was all a bit too much for me. My main aim should be that things seem realistic. And that they stay realistic. On the one hand I'll gladly make the effort to mentally adjust to various bands, but people have to remember my feelings as well. It should be a kind of fifty/fifty relationship. I think a lot more could be sometimes done if people were more willing to do little experiments sometimes. Like adding completely different styles to the art-work like some musicians do with music.''

When he does decide to go for a job, he never forgets the whole marketing aspect and the commercial side of things: ''I try to design every cover, so that it is different and kind of jumps out at you. Like on 'Hell's Animals' for example, or the Tankard Alien. That was really good fun as well.''

Like all creative people, Sebastian Kruger also has his own philosophy of life. And the only difference between him and some of the musicians he works for in the way they are never completely happy with what they achieve, is he works with a brush and not a drum stick or a plectrum.

''One thing that's really important to me is that I don't stagnate. I don't want to take on a particular method of painting

''I've often been disappointed about what the guys are like privately, too. They want the hardest, toughest cover, then they sit around in their track suit pants, smoking Marlboro light, drinking diet Coke - and that's all. Everything the band wants to portray, exists on the cover alone, on stage and in front of the fans.''

Backstabber

Recently spotted being presented with a YAMAHA guitar, CHRIS POTTS, probably the only person in the cosmos *(man)*, who knew all the answers to our cosmic ELOY quiz. Phew, rock 'n' roll, eh?

Recently spotted lining up an Australian tour, POISON. The Australians gave us Kylie Minogue, it's only fair that we should send them something equally musical back. Phew, we should be so lucky, lucky, lucky, lucky, eh?

Recently spotted, causing Western Civilisation to groan to a halt in an orgy of Satanism and general all round nastiness, OZZY OSBOURNE. At least according to 'investigative reporter' ROGER COOK of ITV's 'The Cook Report'. *"I have enough trouble conjuring myself out of the bed in the morning"* quipped the greatest threat to World Peace since Hitler. 'Cook's bollocks!" sez Metal Hammer. Wish I'd some of the stuff that Roger Cook's on quipped a certain Metal Hammer man. Phew, evil goings on all round, eh?

Recently spotted coming yet again to the rescue of the 'Backstabber' page...LAST OF THE TEENAGE IDOLS!
Currently on tour, the band have been hitching from gig to gig because they can only afford one transit van and all the gear is in it. As yet they've not missed a gig because of it but there's always hope.
And there's more...
After a gig in Buckley the band were offered 'accommodation' by a female fan who's parents were away on holiday. The lodgings turned out to be a tent in the garden, and the lucky parents returned early to discover the IDOLS and their road crew camped in the garden and the family dog missing. It had run away.LA staying at some some girls place in Buckley and parents gone away.
And there's more...
At the Birkenhead Stairways club, the band found that a trip to the toilet required a trip through the assembled throng and much climbing of stairs. Being lazy b*st*rds they decided to 'improvise urinating facilities' with an ice bucket.
Enter roadie Billy The Willy. The poor sod decided a wash was in order and proceeded to plunge his hands into an icebucket full of Idols-wee. He's never been seen since. Phew, unsanitary conditions, eh?

Recently spotted sharing a few glasses of champagne with MARC BOLAN. O.K., not recently perhaps, but there's a nice blackmail shot of our illustrious Ed. CHRIS WELCH

circulating showing him and the T. Rex star sporting marvellous matching bog-brush hairstyles. Must have been something to do with the booze. People didn't look like that all the time, did they? Phew, twentieth century boys, eh?

HOLY METAL, IT'S BAT HAMMER!

Powerful messages are radiating through the Universe. They are coming straight from the secret headquarters of Metal Hammer, at the mysterious cave inhabited by Batman and Robin, The Boy Blunder! Switch on a wristwatch radio - and hark - we can hear what's coming in the next issue.

"Now then Boy Blunder, what have we got for dinner, not frozen Bat Fingers again? Can't you do anything right? Now let's see what's planned for our readers."

"Jeepers, Bat Man, we've got some fabuloso features lined up. We're expecting interviews with Motley Crue, and that real cool guy Nikki Sixx. We're gonna see what Ronnie James Dio has in store for us, and we're hoping to have some real hot poop on Aerosmith!"

"Is that ALL, Boy Blunder? I want big names. Who are these guys? Howabout articles on Gang Green, Decadence Within, Jeff Beck and Wolfsbane?"

"Holy cancellations Bat Man, I can do you a whole bunch of features on those guys. And how about Trust, and Disneyland After Dark, or D.A.D. as they're now known? You can even have a big background piece on PA and Lighting, y'know, all that technical stuff our readers dig!"

"Sounds good to me Robin. There's just one thing. I wanna know why you wear those silly tights"

"It's gosh darned cold in this Bat Cave, ever since you forgot to pay the electricity bill Bat Man. Now do you want those Bat Fingers or not...?"

Severe interference is cutting off all communications, and we'll just have to pray that the Caped Crusader will get through and make the world safe for heavy metal. Or should that be safe FROM heavy metal. Anything can happen in the next fortnight. See you then!

METAL BAT HAMMER

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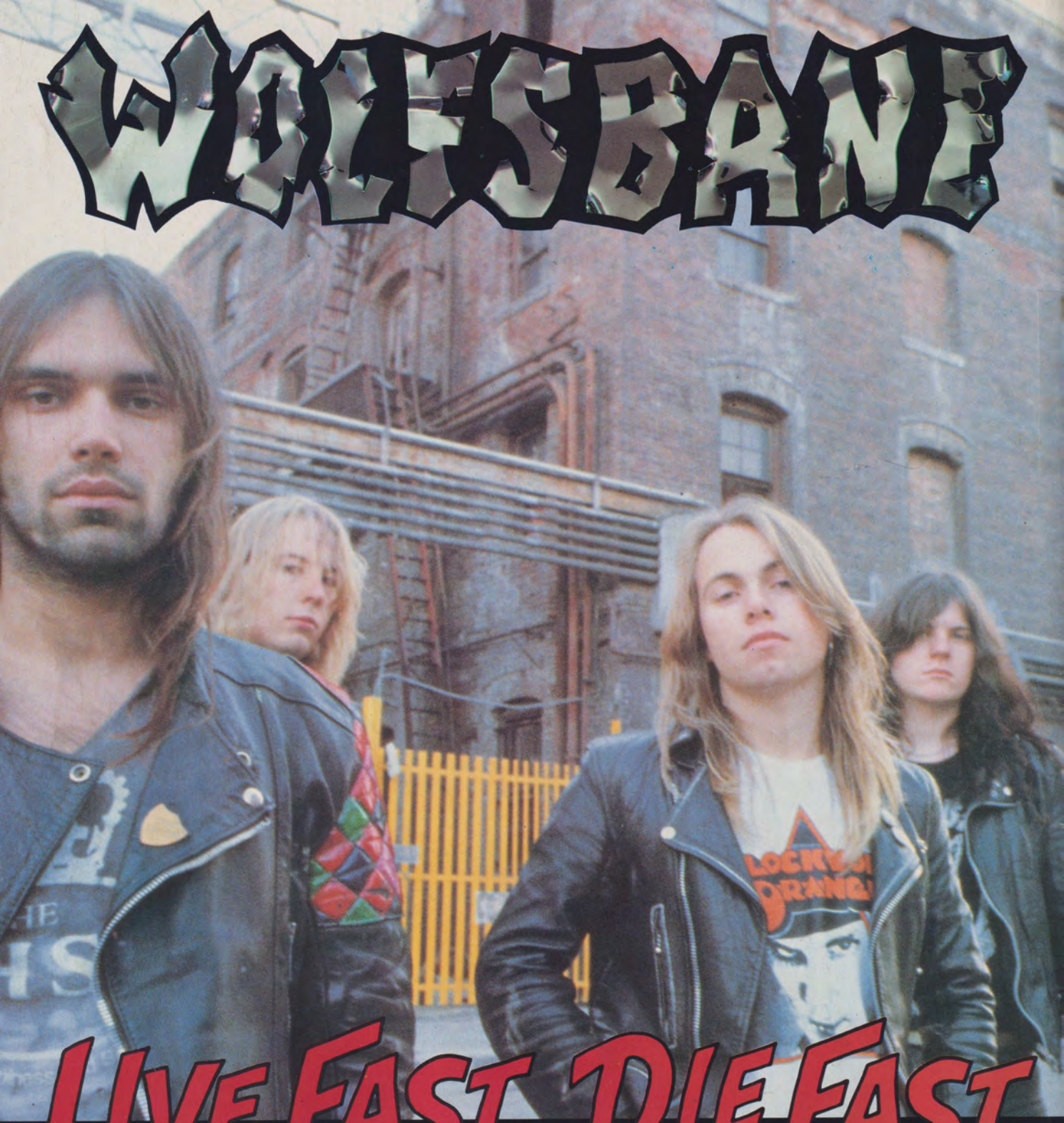
WOLFSBANE



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